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Volume 2, Issue 2  
February / March 2009  
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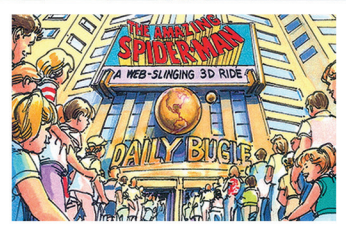
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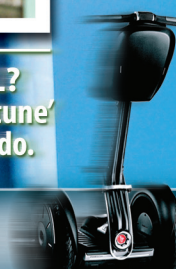


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# Letters



## Economic Woes?

All signs point to the downturn in economies having a negative effect on tourism, especially in the theme park capital of the world that we call home: Orlando. Revenues from resort taxes are down, attendance numbers are off from last year, and companies are hoping their sales at least stay flat from last year's numbers. And yet, in spite of all this, we've barely noticed. Maybe International Drive has looked a little less dense with cars and maybe the parking lots of the more expensive hotels are a little less crowded, but the lines to board attractions in Orlando's theme parks certainly haven't gotten any smaller. In fact, unofficial reports came in that Epcot received its biggest New Year's Eve attendance ever with Soarin' reaching a standby wait time of over four hours! So even if stocks are down, it still appears to be a great time to vacation in Orlando.

*Ricky & Matt*

**Ricky Brigante and Matt Roseboom**  
Publishers and Orlando Fans

## HARD ROCK PARK ORLANDO?

I heard that the Hard Rock Park in Myrtle Beach has closed for good and they are selling their attractions for debt payoffs. Are any of the Orlando attractions going to purchase these rides? I thought Universal would since they have a Hard Rock on the premises. The Hard Rock Park had a good concept, but no big advertising to attract the crowds.

Andrew Weiner  
Drexel Hill, Del.

*We haven't heard anything about any of the attractions here buying the rides, but we have a better idea. They should just move the whole park to Orlando!*

## ICE IN NASHVILLE

I was surprised to see the ICE article in the latest issue. I hadn't heard of such a place until the week before I received the latest issue of OAM [Orlando Attractions Magazine], when my brother had been to something that sounds very similar in Nashville, Tenn. Their theme this year was a Grinch's Christmas and had the ice slide as well. I was amazed at the concept as

my brother showed me pictures of them in their blue parkas and explained their experience. Reading about the details from the Gaylord Palms in the latest issue was insightful and timely. I now want to don my gloves and experience the ICE with my own family somewhere.

Greg Mathews  
Spring, Texas

*Your brother must have gone to see ICE! at the Gaylord Opryland Resort. ICE! returns every year to the Gaylord Resorts, but we think it adds an extra something special to see it in Florida, where it's 80 degrees outside and 9 degrees inside.*

## MULCH, SWEAT & SHEARS PROPS

Did you, by any spectacular chance, get any decent video of Mulch, Sweat & Shears playing in the [Hollywood] Studios on New Year's Eve? I saw a picture taken by one of the band members looking out at the audience and it looked crazy! There was like 40,000 people there. I heard they were just amazing beyond words and I knew if anyone might have gotten it, it would be Orlando Attractions Magazine. Thanks for any help you can give! Have a great night!

Marie Bertini  
Staten Island, N.Y.

*We enjoy the band when we're at Hollywood Studios and it's nice to see them be given the big stage in front of the Sorcerer Hat. Unfortunately, we didn't get to see their New Year's Eve concert. But we did get this picture of the band on stage on Christmas Eve:*



## MICKEY IN THE BUSCH



We were recently at Busch Gardens Tampa and we caught a great "hidden Mickey" moment. This is our 6-year-old daughter Hailey in front of a refreshment stand before they opened. I doubt that Busch Gardens would like to promote Disney, but it was a great opportunity to catch this picture early in the park.

Greg Hischuck  
Naples, Fla.

*Great find. As we've said before, once you start looking for hidden Mickeys, you start seeing them everywhere.*

## INVASION



Where else can you stand nose to nose with an alien?

Carolyn LaRose  
Groton, Mass.

*Well, there are a few aliens at Universal Studios. There are aliens in the Men in Black ride, the Jimmy Neutron ride and The Simpsons ride. But the only other place we can think of where you can*



## THEN



If there's one thing that's regularly changing at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom, it's the daytime parade. Over the years, Magic Kingdom has hosted at least 18 different daytime parades down Main Street U.S.A. with another on the way soon (see "Work in Progress" on page 12).

In the two photographs on the left above, Mickey and Minnie Mouse celebrate Walt Disney World's 10th anniversary in the "Tencennial Parade" which ran daily for exactly one year at the Magic Kingdom, beginning on Oct. 1, 1981.

"Mickey's Street Party" premiered in January 1985 and lasted nearly two years until the park hit its 15th anniversary, at which time the "15 Years of Magic" parade launched.

## AND NOW...



The current daytime parade (pictured above) has been around since the Magic Kingdom's 30th birthday in 2001, though it has gone through some minor changes over the past 7-plus years. Originally called the "Share a Dream Come True Parade," Mickey Mouse and friends would travel through the park in giant float-sized snowglobes. Since then, the snowglobes have disappeared and the music has changed, but the general theme and floats remain the same. The name became the "Disney Dreams Come True Parade" in 2006 and will soon be the "Celebrate a Dream Come True Parade," in honor of the "What Will You Celebrate?" promotion currently running throughout Walt Disney World.

**stand nose to nose with an alien is at the end of the E.T. ride, where you can get your picture with one of the most famous aliens of all. (Even if he is a little stiff.)**

### A YEE FAN

As a subscriber and avid reader of *Orlando Attractions Magazine*, I want to thank you for the most recent issue. I particularly enjoyed Kevin Yee's article on ICE at the Gaylord Palms Resort. I've always enjoyed Mr. Yee's insights, and to find that he has a regular print home is a joy.

If I have any complaint, it is that Mr. Yee's features have increasingly been about non-Disney attractions. I find he is at his best writing about Walt Disney World and other Disney parks. Still, it's a delight to have him writing about other Orlando restaurants and attractions as well.

My brother, Mike Jackson, gave me a gift subscription last year, but with Kevin Yee as part of your staff I'll be gladly paying for my own renewal! Thanks again for a great publication.

Bill Jackson  
Whitefish Bay, Wis.

***We're lucky to have a great group of writers. We'll keep Kevin in mind for the next Disney story that becomes available.***

### OBSESSED WITH ORLANDO

I wanted to start by saying "We love the magazine!!!!!!!" I book Disney and Universal Orlando vacations because when we first visited, I became obsessed. I would saturate friends and neighbors that would go with so much info, I took a course and now do it as a little part-time job.

Your magazine gives me more info about the parks than I even get in the

collateral that Disney and Universal supply – especially when you did the spread on Aquatica because I had people going out there before I got to see it.

We just got back in November from our first visit to Halloween Horror Nights and your article was my guide in letting me plan in advance which houses we would definitely try to get in.

Anyway, I renewed my subscription and went out to the mailbox today and got my Dec./Jan. issue (volume 2, issue 1) and all that was there was the cover. Could I please, please get another one? Thanking you in advance

Rosemarie Branda  
Williamstown, N.J.

***There they go again. Those mail carriers need to be more careful with priceless merchandise like Orlando Attractions Magazine. We're sorry about that. You should already have your replacement.***





## THE BEST T-SHIRT IN THE PARK

Many months ago I won an Attractions Magazine T-shirt in the Mystery Photo competition. I recently went to WDW and took my T-shirt with me. So I thought I would send you a photo of me in the shirt in front of the castle. Unfortunately it was quite hot so I couldn't keep it on for too long. (Decency police needn't worry, I did have a top on underneath!)

Thanks for the great magazine, and for letting me win the competition!

Debbie Barker  
Cambridge, U.K.

*We didn't let you win – you won fair and square. Congratulations. We'd love to publish more photos of our readers wearing an Attractions shirt in the parks. Or just send us a photo of you with the magazine in one of the parks.*

## FAVORITE PHOTOS



I don't really have any stories about these [photos]. I am out at Walt Disney World about five times a year and every time I take tons of photos. These are just two of my favorites.

Zach Brady  
Fletcher, N.C.

*Thanks for sharing. They're great. That's a very patriotic view of the castle. Everyone please keep the great photos coming. You can submit them on our Web site.*

**Correction:** Last issue we incorrectly listed letter writer Kurt Nelson as being from Winter Garden instead of his hometown of Winter Park. That's about a 30-minute difference. Sorry Kurt.

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# Vacation Planner

## FEBRUARY

**1** Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium in Orlando hosts an exhibit of Ripley's famous **fertility statues**.

**1** Old Town will host **Latin Sundays** with live music, Spanish food and party beads.

**5 - 8** Old Town will host Eckler's **Chevy Classics** Club's 17th Annual Winter National Show.



**6 - May 3** **Jim Henson's Fantastic World** exhibit will be on display at the Orange County Regional History Center.

**7 - March 1** SeaWorld and Busch Gardens will present the **Bud & BBQ Concert Series**. SeaWorld will welcome Blake Shelton, Kenny Rogers, Daryl Hall and John Oates, and Jason Aldean to its stage different Saturdays during the series. Busch Gardens will present Phil Vassar, Miranda Lambert and Gregg Allman and Friends on different Sundays.

**7** **KC & The Sunshine Band** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**7** **Eddie Money and Rick Springfield** will be in concert at Silver Springs.

**8** Old Town will host **Latin Sundays** with live



music, Spanish food and party beads.

**12** **Space Shuttle Discovery** is scheduled to launch from Kennedy Space Center.

**14** Old Town will host The **Florida Lightning** Owner's Club.

**14** **Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**14** **Soap Star Hunks** will be appearing at Silver Springs.

**15** **Village People** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**15** Old Town will host **Latin Sundays** with live music, Spanish food and party beads.

**21** **Ne-Yo** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**21** **Mark Chesnutt** will be in concert at Silver Springs.

**22** Old Town will host **Latin Sundays** with live music, Spanish food and party beads.

**27 - 28** Old Town will host the **Nova, Nova, Nova** car show.



**27 - March 1** **MegaCon 2009**, the Mega Convention of comic books and related media will be held at the Orange County Convention Center.

**28** **Pat Benatar** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**28** **George Jones** will be in concert at Silver Springs.

**28** Old Town will host the **Wide Track Warriors** 17th annual Pontiac car show and swap.

## MARCH

**N/A** **Cypress Gardens** is supposed to reopen sometime in March after a major refurbishment over the past four months. The new park will feature an expanded water park area, and a focus on their gardens and ski show, with no more rides or animals.

**7 - 29** SeaWorld and Busch Gardens will present their annual **Viva La Musica concert series**. El Gran Combo, India, Tito El Bambino and Fonseca will perform different Saturdays at SeaWorld, and R.K.M and Ken-Y, Guayacan, Grupo Mania and El Gran Combo will perform different Sundays at Busch Gardens.

**7** **Barenaked Ladies** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**7** **Kansas** will be in concert at Silver Springs.

**13** Old Town will host the **Florida Edsel Club** and the **Studebakers Drivers Club**.

**14** **Montgomery Gentry** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**14** **John Michael Montgomery** will be in concert at Silver Springs.

**18 - May 31** The **International Flower and Garden Festival** will be held at Epcot.

**21** **Collective Soul** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**27** **Boys Like Girls** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**28** **Kelly Clarkson** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**28** **Glen Campbell** will be in concert at Silver Springs.

## APRIL

**4** **MC Hammer** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**4 - 5** A **Spring Art Festival** will be held in Celebration.

**5** Old Town will host the **Florida LX Club**, featuring the "LX" Platform of vehicles from Dodge and Chrysler.

**11** **Trace Adkins** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.



**17 - 19** **FX Show 2009**, a toy and comic convention will be held at the Orange County Convention Center.

**18** **Nelly** will perform at Universal Studios' Mardi Gras.

**18 - 19** Celebration will host their **Exotic Car Festival**.



**25 - 26** The **Great American Pie Festival** will be held in Celebration.



## Drab Wizardry

LOCATION:  
ISLANDS OF  
ADVENTURE

■ STATUS:  
UNDER  
CONSTRUCTION



That curious metal structure in the **future location of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter** at Islands of Adventure that we've been running pictures of for several issues has now been enclosed to form ... a big grey box. It's still not clear what this giant building will hold, but we're betting it'll be something more exciting than grey walls.

## Surf and Snack

LOCATION:  
UNIVERSAL CITYWALK

■ STATUS:  
UNDER  
CONSTRUCTION



In addition to the Burger King Whopper Bar, **Moe's Southwest Grill** and **Panda Express** are being added to Universal CityWalk's second story. In addition to the new eateries, a **new store called Element by Billabong** will sell clothing as well as surf and skateboard equipment.

## Coaster Takeover

LOCATION: UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

■ STATUS:  
UNDER  
CONSTRUCTION



If you were ever a fan of the old Ghostbusters attraction at Universal Studios, you're not going to be happy about this picture. **The Rip, Ride, and Rockit roller coaster** has completely changed the landscape of this park area, as if someone took some track and dropped it randomly into the street. The former Ghostbusters firehouse is seemingly blown wide open to allow for the track to pass through. We can only hope that Slimer will make a cameo in there somewhere.

## Hot Enough for Ya?

LOCATION:  
ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE

■ STATUS:  
INSTALLED



New people-dryers have popped up at Islands of Adventure's Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls. These **unique "body-dryers"** create a "warm air vortex" (according to manufacturer Haystack Dryers) that allows soaked guests to quickly and comfortably dry off. Each unit holds up to four people but those not willing to simply dry off in the sun had better be ready to shell out \$5 per cycle.



## Thanks, Sony for the New Stage! ■ STATUS: COMPLETE

LOCATION: SEAWORLD

SeaWorld now contains an **enhanced Bayside Stadium stage**, constructed for the recent traveling production of *Wheel of Fortune* (see the story in this issue for more on that show). The formerly small stage now extends well into the lagoon allowing for much larger shows.



## Free Beer? Not Anymore.

■ STATUS: GONE

LOCATION: SEAWORLD & BUSCH GARDENS



As a result of the acquisition of Anheuser-Busch by InBev, **free Budweiser beer will no longer be given out to theme park guests** of legal drinking age at SeaWorld or Busch Gardens. Beer is still available for purchase throughout the parks, including at the formerly free locations. Bummer.

## Manta Tops Off

LOCATION: SEAWORLD

■ STATUS: UNDER CONSTRUCTION



The **final piece of track has been added to SeaWorld's new Manta flying roller coaster**, slated to open summer 2009. While the coaster may appear finished at a glance, there is still much work to be done creating the underwater animal habitats, exhibits and other cosmetics.

## The Titanic Returns

■ STATUS: COMPLETE

LOCATION: INTERNATIONAL DRIVE



**Titanic The Experience has reopened on International Drive.** The attraction used to be in the Mercado Shopping Center on I-Drive until the shopping center owners decided to demolish the plaza. It was then temporarily set up at the Orlando Science Center. Now it's finally found a new home at 7324 International Drive, between Sand Lake Road and Universal Boulevard.

## Come and Get It!

LOCATION: DISNEY'S CONTEMPORARY RESORT

■ STATUS: COMPLETE

The **Contempo Cafe**, which replaced the Concourse Steakhouse, is now open for quick snacking. The eatery is open daily from 11 a.m. to midnight and features flatbreads, salads and cold sandwiches. For those not wanting to wait for a freshly-tossed salad, refrigerators are available for grab-and-go items.





# Work in Progress ?

## Dance Magic

■ STATUS:  
IN THE WORKS

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM



As part of Disney's "What Will You Celebrate?" promotion, the **Magic Kingdom will soon be home to three new experiences.** The "Move It, Shake It, Celebrate It!" Street Party will bring popular Disney characters down Main Street U.S.A. accompanied by tunes including *I Like To Move It* and Miley Cyrus' *Breakout*. The daytime parade will receive enhancements under the new name, "Celebrate a Dream Come True." Finally, Tomorrowland will host a regular "Supersonic Celebration" courtesy of Experiment 626, better known as Stitch.

## This... is Almost American Idol

■ STATUS:  
TEST-AND-ADJUST

LOCATION: DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS



**The American Idol Experience is officially scheduled to open on Feb. 14.** Testing with Disney's cast members and guests took place throughout the month of January followed by scheduled soft openings to Walt Disney World Annual Passholders. By the time you read this, next season's new talent may have already started down a path to stardom that began at Disney's Hollywood Studios.

## I Want Goofy!

■ STATUS:  
COMPLETE

LOCATION:  
DOWNTOWN DISNEY

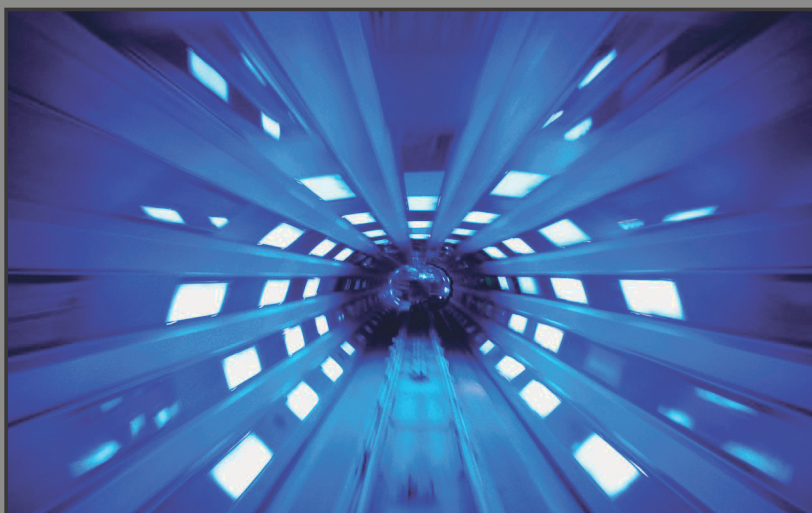


Disney and Hanes have partnered to create the **new Design a Tee store**, which opened at Downtown Disney on Jan. 9. The store allows guests to choose from more than 300 pieces of Disney art and add up to four lines of text onto customized T-shirts. Of course, this being Walt Disney World, the custom lines of text are limited to using only family-friendly words.

## Clear for Refurbishment

■ STATUS:  
NEARLY CLOSED

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM



The rumors have finally come true. Disney has announced that its iconic roller coaster, **Space Mountain, will be closing for refurbishment** on April 19 for several months. This means that guests expecting to hitch a ride to the stars will have to settle for Epcot's Mission: Space in the meantime. Enhancements to this version of Space Mountain will not be as far-reaching as its recently-renovated cousin in California. A new ceiling, queue enclosures, some track replacement are among the list of priorities.



## Fantasmic Not So Fantastic

LOCATION: DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

■ STATUS:  
SHORTENED



With the American Idol Experience launching its nightly finale shows soon, the always-popular **Fantasmic nighttime spectacular will be reduced from performing seven nights a week to just two.** Unfortunately, the Superstar Television Theater, where the Idol set is located, only holds 1,000 people. Compared to the capacity of more than 6,000 at the Fantasmic Theater, we're left wondering what the other 5,000 guests will do while the Idol show is going on.

## Not Quite Up and Away

LOCATION: DOWNTOWN DISNEY

■ STATUS:  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Construction has begun on the upcoming **"Aerophile" balloon at Downtown Disney.** The giant tethered gas-balloon will bring guests 300 feet into the air for six minutes at a time. Holding up to 30 guests, the balloon will allow for views of up to 10 miles. At night, the entire balloon will glow, making it visible from equally as far. Guests should be able to see most of Walt Disney World and well into the Orlando area from that height. Get those zoom lenses ready!



## Ah, Much Better

LOCATION: DOWNTOWN DISNEY

■ STATUS:  
COMPLETE

What was once a glorified slab of concrete is now a **scenic stage at Downtown Disney.** Performers may now exhibit their talents beneath a cover, complete with lighting and sound systems. Unfortunately, guests watching shows at this enhanced stage don't get the same luxuries as the performers – their seats are still exposed to the elements.



For more  
"Work in Progress"  
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### CURRENT MATCH-UP

## SPEED AT WALT DISNEY WORLD **VS.** SPEED AT UNIVERSAL ORLANDO



#### TWISTS AND TURNS

Expedition Everest's mythical yeti is fierce, but its coaster doesn't reach top speeds.



**WINNER:** The Dueling Dragons, Fire and Ice, deliver double the thrill.



#### LAUNCHES

Rock 'n' Roller Coaster's straightforward launch doesn't match Hulk's vertical velocity.



**WINNER:** HULK COASTER MAD. HULK COASTER SMASH AEROSMITH.



#### SIMULATED SPEED

Captain Rex may take you on an unexpected tour across the Death Star's trench, but in the end, Star Tours isn't much for speed beyond a bumpy simulator.



**WINNER:** Virtually swinging over New York courtesy of Spider-Man's webs feels virtually faster than Star Tours' virtual jump to lightspeed.



#### DARING DROPS

**WINNER:** Doctor Doom's got nothing on Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone*-induced faster-than-gravity fall in darkness at the Tower of Terror.



Doctor Doom's Fear Fall packs plenty of fear on the way up but the actual "fall" part of the "fear fall" is more like a gentle descent to the ground.



#### GET SOAKED

**TOSS-UP:** A collection of cute characters sing you into comfortable submission before your speedy plummet on Splash Mountain.



**TOSS-UP:** A collection of not-so-cute carnivores chase you into quiet desperation before your perilous plunge out of Jurassic Park.



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# Photo Finds

Orlando is always filled with fun things to see and our photographers are there to capture it all.

**Visit our Web site for videos and more photos from many of these events.**



*Photo by Chuck Lionberger*

Miley Cyrus rocked the Magic Kingdom during the **Walt Disney World Christmas Day Parade** taping on Dec. 6, 2008. Cyrus performed several songs in front of Cinderella Castle that afternoon before a large wildly-cheering crowd. The performance was aired on Christmas morning on ABC.



*Photo by Bret Roseboom*

**Manheim Steamroller** held two concerts at **Universal Studios** on Dec. 6, free for all park guests. The group had previously recorded the music for Universal's annual Grinchmas Musical. During the concert, the group performed with the 'uncostumed' cast of the musical, including the Grinch, as well as many of their Christmas favorites.



The **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions** (IAAPA) held their annual expo in Orlando in mid-November at the Orlando Convention Center. The massive show floor included everything you could want to start your own theme park – from rides, to costumes, to 3-D shows, to novelty cups. Next year the show moves to Las Vegas.



Cities In Wonderland was the theme for **2008's annual International Food & Wine Festival at Epcot**, held during November. During this festival, park guests can enjoy cuisine from countries all over the world. This year, the food and wine booths were named after particular cities of different countries instead of the countries themselves.





**Retired professional wrestler Bret "Hitman" Hart** signed copies of his new autobiography at the Virgin Megastore at Downtown Disney on Nov. 19. Fans waited more than an hour in line to meet the Hitman.



**The Festival of the Masters** was held over the weekend of Nov. 8, 2008 at Downtown Disney and featured many booths of fine art as well as many sidewalk chalk drawings in the Marketplace area.



**Fourth-grade children from Sand Lake Elementary School** in Orlando hold up ideas for their own magazines. *Orlando Attractions Magazine* Editor-in-Chief Matt Roseboom spoke to the class about this magazine during their career day. Each student then had to come up with their own ideas for a magazine and design the cover. Some of the magazine ideas included the subjects of pies, autos, puzzles and Pokémon.



*Photo by Jackie Roseboom*

Walt Disney World annual passholders who were lucky enough to sign up quickly got a special **tour of the Cinderella Castle Suite** at the Magic Kingdom on Dec. 15. The suite has been used for prize winners for Disney's "Year of a Million Dreams" for the past two years. Now it's still being used as a prize in other promotions.

**MouseFest 2008** was held at Walt Disney World in December. The annual gathering of Disney fans, publishers and podcasters began on a Disney cruise for some, and also included meets at different Disney locations over five days. Pictured here are some of the attendees of the *Orlando Attractions Magazine/Inside The Magic* podcast meet.





# SOLVING TOP SECRET MISSIONS WITH KIM POSSIBLE

## NEW ADVENTURE AT EPCOT TURNS GUESTS INTO UNDERCOVER AGENTS

BY DEBORAH BRAUSER  
PHOTOS BY MATT ROSEBOOM



**W**ith its public grand opening on Jan. 28, the Kim Possible World Showcase Adventure at Epcot is officially ready for business – spy business that is.

Teaming up with animated characters from the popular espionage-themed kids' TV show, guests are led through what feels like an elaborate, high-tech scavenger hunt. By following instructions from a hand-held "Kimmunicator" to gather clues throughout one of the seven participating World Showcase countries, various interactive "rewards" are triggered: a parrot comes to life and speaks, a photo of your group mysteriously appears on your wireless device, or a volcano suddenly erupts. And it all happens when your party pushes the buttons.

"It's definitely non-traditional," explained Jeanette Lomboy-Russo, senior show producer with Walt Disney Imagineering and show producer of the new Kim Possible Adventure. "It lets guests truly interact with their environment and create fun at their own pace. Plus, there are no lines for this new attraction!"

### MISSION: POSSIBLE

Lomboy-Russo said the original idea for the Adventure came out of Disney's Research and Development department. "We were asked to create an experience with the same high quality and high caliber that everyone expects from Disney, but with a high-tech flair aimed towards our new generation of

guests." That's when they came up with a plan for an interactive adventure that puts "the power of the attraction into a guest's hands."

Once that idea was established, designing it around the Kim Possible show was quickly agreed upon, said Lomboy-Russo. "It's a brand that kids can relate to. She's a high-tech teenage crimefighter who completes missions around the globe. So we all agreed that Epcot's World Showcase was a great place to set this up."

In the summer of 2006, a play test was set up allowing guests to help Kim and her friends work through missions and track down colorfully-named villains from her TV show such as Professor Dementor, Monkey Fist, Señor Senior, Sr. and his son Señor Senior, Jr, and the dreaded Doctor Drakken.

In 2007, the Adventure won a prestigious THEA award for outstanding quality from the Themed Entertainment Association. "Receiving this award even before we were open was incredible," said Lomboy-Russo. "And we've improved upon it since then! From the play test, through previews, to now, our guests have really enjoyed the whole secret agent experience."

### IF YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT THIS ASSIGNMENT...

Signing up for spy duty is easy and very affordable, as it's included in the park admission price. First, stop by a Recruitment Center at Innoventions East



**THE KIMMUNICATOR IS VITAL TO YOUR MISSION'S SUCCESS.**

or West, or on the World Showcase Plaza bridge for a Mission pass. Then, head over to one of the Field Stations located in Norway, Italy or the International Gateway and pick up a Kimmunicator for your group, which is a modified cell phone. The characters will then come on screen with the first of several assignments, based on your Mission – and your Mission country. Sometimes these tasks are easy and straightforward, such as, "Go to the exterior of the marketplace in Mexico and then hit OK." (With the next instruction coming only after the exact spot has been activated.) Other times they're a little tricky as clues must be solved before moving on. Throughout, you'll be amazed at the incredible amount of detail work

## CLASSIFIED

Here's a top secret look at one of the many clues you will find throughout the Kim Possible World Showcase Adventure. Upon activation, this ordinary-looking statue's eyes light up and its tongue sticks out to reveal any secret agent's worst enemy – a well-hidden bug.



that's gone into designing this project. Locations, landmarks and signs you may never have noticed before are now used in creative ways, along with brand new props and effects that have been integrated seamlessly into the park's overall design.

In fact, keeping the details of the missions almost hidden amongst Epcot's old world architecture was important to Disney. "We wanted to let it play out in a fun, yet quiet way that wouldn't disrupt other guests not wanting to participate – which keeps with the covert mission theme!" said Lomboy-Russo. In addition, non-playing guests can enjoy the various special effects and activities, even if they have no idea what caused them to start moving. "We like that it's all very secretive, yet fun for others just walking by. They become intrigued with these hidden things that happen and then want to get involved with their own missions."

Mexico, France, the United Kingdom, China, Norway, Japan and Germany currently offer missions throughout their pavilions, with each one averaging around 30 to 45 minutes. Though it's certainly possible to complete them all in one day, many guests enjoy just doing a couple and then finishing up the others at a later date. And even if a guest does complete all seven missions, they can find something new in playing them

all over again. "Guests don't receive every assignment created for every mission," reported Lomboy-Russo. "It's the same general story line, the same villains, and the same finale. However, the order of the tasks and even which ones assigned are all random. That means no experience is ever exactly the same."

By the way, guests can request particular countries from the operations cast members. Though a mission is usually assigned based on the soonest start time available, they will work with you to get exactly what you want. When asked if new missions for Italy, Morocco, Canada and America could be introduced in the future, Lomboy-Russo said that based on guest response, "It's certainly possible."

For now, exploring seven exhilarating, highly-detailed "Save the World" missions through hidden areas of seven countries will keep guests plenty busy. "Over the course of five years, a few hundred folks have worked on the Kim Possible Adventure in some capacity," said Lomboy-Russo. "It covers a lot of area and scope and breadth. As Walt Disney Imagineers, we're just really proud of this unique and special attraction that's unlike anything Disney has ever done before. And one that enhances and shows off parts of the World Showcase in a whole new light. It's been an incredible adventure!"

## SPIES LIKE US KIM POSSIBLE REVIEW

The beauty of this attraction is that even if you have no idea who the Kim Possible characters are, you can still have a blast. And though individuals can easily complete the missions by themselves, it's especially designed for groups and families.

When I got the chance to try out the experience for myself, our group clustered in tightly around the easy-to-use Kimmunicator to watch Wade and the other animated characters, and then took turns reading instructions and working the controls. And I'm happy to report the adults had just as much fun running up to the various locations as the 9-year-old boy who was with us. It even felt a little like we were competitors on *The Amazing Race* TV show.

It was also amusing to run into other groups in the middle of their own missions, with one participant even calling out, "Hello fellow agents!" Overall, the Adventure made me appreciate things at Epcot I hadn't noticed before, in a fun group atmosphere that had us all working as a team. It's one of the few attractions that families and group members of all ages can participate in and enjoy together, including kids celebrating their birthdays, adults during theme park meet-ups and anyone else ready for a high-tech, immersive experience. In other words, it's pretty perfect for just about everyone.

One small tip: After each mission's grand finale, guests deposit their Kimmunicators in special drop boxes. On our first mission, we dropped our device in a little early and then heard the muffled sounds of our last instructions from the bottom of the box. Learn from our mistake – wait until the instructions actually tell you to "drop it off now" before doing so. This is one adventure where you won't want to miss even one fun detail.



# VEHICULAR VELOCITY ON VACATION

WHERE TO FIND ORLANDO'S FASTEST THRILLS

By Ricky Brigante Photos by Matt Roseboom

Orlando is generally considered a family-friendly destination. For many, the term “family-friendly” translates to slow “kiddie” rides and shows featuring cartoon animals dancing around. The belief that you should only vacation in Orlando if you’re traveling with children likely stems from the large presence of Orlando’s original theme park, Disney’s Magic Kingdom, which features nothing but family-friendly attractions. But over the last 10 years, Disney and other local theme park companies have been working hard to not only maintain a family-friendly environment but also develop unique vehicles you can strap into to experience world-class thrills.

## Orlando’s Thrill Pioneer

Disney’s first thrilling attraction to be built in Orlando is one of the world’s most famous roller coasters: Space Mountain. When it officially opened in 1975, an indoor roller coaster featuring two tracks winding in near-complete darkness was unheard of. In 1980, a new outdoor roller coaster at the Magic Kingdom called Big Thunder Mountain Railroad opened, leaping over Space Mountain’s maximum speed of just 28 mph with its own top speed of around 35 mph. While these speeds were thrilling for their time, today’s thrill seekers demand bigger and faster rides.

That demand began to be met by Disney in 1998 when they premiered a different kind of attraction that began a chain of thrill rides emerging in Orlando. Epcot’s Test Track combined Disney’s

tried-and-true formula of creating rides based on stories with an element of speed. Benjamin Thompson, public relations manager of new media at Walt Disney World Resort, called Test Track an “insiders look into how real automobiles are tested.” Thompson added, “While it’s a fast ride and it’s definitely thrilling, it’s shown through the prism of a behind-the-scenes look of how cars are tested in the testing facilities.”

At its climax, Test Track’s open-air six-passenger vehicles speed around an outdoor banked turn at 65 mph, planting it firmly at the top of Walt Disney World’s fastest attractions, even faster than any of the roller coasters found there. When approaching the attraction from the front, nearby guests’ attention is drawn to the popular banked turn both visually and audibly, with the loud but not abrasive sound of pure speed. “You can see that

the Imagineers put the speed front and center so that draws you in,” Thompson explained. In fact, you can even hear the sounds of Test Track from throughout many areas of the large theme park.

It was no accident that Walt Disney World’s fastest ride turned out to be something other than a roller coaster. Returning to the notion of family-friendly attractions, Thompson emphasized, “The thrill is there but there’s much more time spent in the story about the thrill before you get to the actual climax of the attraction.” As long as guests meet the minimum height requirement of 40 inches, riding Test Track is a must-do for thrill seekers and casual Epcot visitors. “It’s something that the whole family can go on,” Thompson added, “from the very young to the very old. It’s probably one of our thrill attractions that’s really the most family-friendly.”



**Test Track at Epcot places guests inside a fictional automobile testing facility. The attraction climaxes with a high-speed dash that begins with a simulated crash test.**

## The Real Race Track

Some might say that riding on Test Track is no different than traveling down a highway in a convertible. For those looking to push the limits of speed while in Orlando, a visit to the Walt Disney World Speedway is a necessity. Built 13 years ago adjacent to the Magic Kingdom parking lot, the Speedway began as a home for the Indy Racing League (IRL). IRL and NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series races took place at the track for many years but had all ceased by 1998 due to various disputes between Disney and the racing leagues.

Rather than letting the approximately \$6 million speedway go to waste, the Richard Petty Driving Experience moved in as a unique attraction for Walt Disney World guests. Chris McKee, their marketing director, said the track has since offered race fans a chance to get in and ride and /or drive authentic race cars. That's right, this attraction actually lets average guests take control of real stock cars, just like those found in NASCAR. "People say it's the world's greatest roller coaster," said McKee. "At a track like this you're pulling speeds of close to 130 mph when you're going for a ride and you're pulling a couple of G's when you go through the corners." When compared to riding on a roller coaster, McKee explained, "It's a different sensation, especially when you're driving because you're in control so it's a little bit different feel as opposed to riding shotgun. Riding shotgun is when you really feel like you're on a roller coaster." Of course, no roller coaster in Orlando comes anywhere near 130 mph.

As if traveling around the tight banked curves of a professional speedway in a race car isn't thrilling enough, the Richard Petty Driving Experience heightens the excitement by often adding a second car to the track when two ride-alongs are scheduled together. It then becomes a true racing experience, with the pair of cars seemingly passing within inches of each other, swapping between the trailing and leading positions. It's as close to



**The Walt Disney World Speedway now offers both Indycar and NASCAR style riding and driving experiences reaching speeds of up to 130 mph.**

professional racing as the average visitor can encounter. McKee added, "Speed, adrenaline, it's definitely a rush, it gives everyone a whole new appreciation for what the stars in the NASCAR world do. There really isn't a thrill that's quite like it."

But in November 2008, a new attraction premiered at the Walt Disney World Speedway called the Indy Racing Experience, giving guests a chance to ride or drive in open wheel Indy cars. Like the stock cars in the Richard Petty Driving Experience, the Indy cars reach speeds of around 130 mph in the ride-along experience, though being just a few inches off the ground makes the experience seem even faster (and a whole lot bumpier). When guests drive the cars, speeds can vary greatly. Scott Jasek, co-owner of the Indy Racing Experience, explained, "We always say it's to your comfort level, so we have some people come out and just drive 50 to 60 mph and we have people that go over 100 mph."

But there is currently no speed limit either. "There would be [a limit], but we've never had anyone reach it," said Jasek. "I don't want to say a number, I'm

not trying to set a goal. What's important is that we're a racing experience, not a racing school."

The cars featured in the Indy Racing Experience differ between the driving and ride-along versions. In the driving experience, guests step into an Indy car that has actually raced in the Indianapolis 500. Jasek explained that the ride-along two-seater version is "a real Indycar stretched to accommodate the second person. It's powered by a real Indycar engine and driven by licensed Indycar drivers. It's custom built, it's 22 inches longer and it has a few extra safety features. The car costs around \$650,000."

Fortunately, neither experience costs quite as much as the cars are worth – but they're not cheap either. Unlike riding Test Track, which is included in the admission price of Epcot, the Richard Petty Driving Experience and the Indy Racing Experience ride-along programs cost a little more than \$100. The driving experiences start at around \$400 and can reach as high as nearly \$1,400 for 30 laps around the track in a stock car.

So is the thrill worth the risk of riding in a trackless vehicle, fully controlled



***The Incredible Hulk Coaster, Orlando's fastest roller coaster, can be found at Universal's Islands of Adventure theme park.***

***A ride on this popular coaster starts with a high-speed launch out of a tunnel and into a zero-G roll (pictured right).***

***The ride vehicle then sends riders plummeting into a steep dive, topping out at 67 mph as they reach the bottom of the drop (pictured far right).***



either by a driver or yourself? Jasek summarized both Walt Disney World Speedway attractions, "Riding in these vehicles is something that's going to last a lifetime. That's a memory that you'll just take forever. People that have done our experience – you run into them all over the place – and they still talk about it. To ride in an Indy car, or ride in a NASCAR, is a very unique experience that you'll talk about forever, where roller coasters and all the others – not that they're not fun and exciting – but that memory may not always stay with you as it would an Indy car or a NASCAR experience."

## ***Universal Appeal***

It didn't take long for other theme parks in Orlando to answer Disney's Test Track with thrill rides of their own. Bars were raised high when Islands of Adventure opened at the Universal Orlando Resort in 1999, less than a year after Test Track's premiere. At its opening, Islands of Adventure featured three top-of-the-line roller coasters. One in particular continues to be prominently featured on nearly all coaster fanatics' list of favorites.

With a maximum speed of 67 mph, the Incredible Hulk Coaster is Orlando's fastest roller coaster, exceeding Test

Track's maximum speed by two miles-per-hour. The attraction exerts up to four G's (that's four times the force of gravity) on riders. Unlike Test Track, the entire ride has non-stop thrills. The Incredible Hulk Coaster is packed with excitement from the very beginning.

Steve Blum, senior vice-president of engineering and safety at Universal Orlando, described the start of the ride. "You leave the station normally and you start up the hill very slowly, because we wanted it to seem like it was going to be the standard-fare roller coaster experience." But not all is as it seems. Dr. Bruce Banner, as the story goes, turns into the Incredible Hulk as a result of a failed experiment with gamma radiation. "Now he's on this endless quest to try and determine something that he can do technically to reverse the process," explained Blum. Riders become part of that "process" as they begin to slowly ascend the lift hill, enclosed in a tunnel pointed at the sky. After a few quick warnings from a computerized female voice, the ride vehicle unexpectedly launches guests from 0 to 40 mph in just two seconds. Before the rush from the launch wears off, guests are sent through a zero-G roll 110 feet above the ground. "We wanted it to suddenly go out of control," said

Blum. "We think we achieved that and a lot of folks, even though they see the ride come out of the tube, before they walk into the queue line, don't realize that's going to happen to them." The thrill is continuous throughout the launch. "We never stop accelerating all the way up the hill. We didn't want it to feel like the machine wasn't constantly delivering this raw energy to you."

The moment the ride reaches its top speed comes just after the zero-G roll, as the ride vehicle reaches the bottom of a drop. Depending on the temperature outside and weight distribution on the train, a second drop, which sends riders under a bridge and below the water level of a nearby lagoon, can nearly match the 67 mph reached at the bottom of the first.

Even though the Incredible Hulk Coaster is the fastest roller coaster in Orlando, speed was not a major factor in its design. "We wanted to have some unique ride experience elements – track elements – that you couldn't get anywhere else," said Blum, "and, of course, we wanted to wrap a story around it. But we didn't set out to be the '-est' – fastest, tallest, longest. We thought those were fleeting badges that people get to wear, whereas when you set out to do things that fall into the



'best' category, as opposed to just the largest or most expensive, maybe that had longevity. Hulk has proven to have that kind of longevity, so we're really happy with that." In fact, the fast speed of the attraction isn't even high on the list of design elements. "We focused on the themeing, the look of the track, the ride vehicle, the space that you go through to get onto the ride vehicle, the story, the launch, and the specific aspects of the launch," Blum said. "If you asked me the top five things on the whole roller coaster, [speed] probably wouldn't even be on the list."

The pride Blum and other designers at Universal Orlando feel for the Incredible Hulk Coaster comes from the appreciation shown by the ride's fans. "It may be Orlando's fastest," Blum said, "but the thing that I think we focus on is it still gets rated as the best roller coaster – on a high-frequency basis. We like that."

Unlike the Disney's family-friendly thrills in Test Track, the Incredible Hulk Coaster was not designed with all guests in mind. Its 54-inch minimum height requirement prohibits most children from riding. However, that limit is for their own safety, both physically and mentally. Blum explained that the height requirements are "set by some biomechanical and ergonomic limitations as well as trying to make sure you select the age categories for which the level of excitement and thrill of the experience might be a little bit beyond their emotional development."

But this ride isn't only for adrenaline-junkies. "We certainly get all of the thrill-seekers," said Blum, "but we also get some folks who are inclined to challenge themselves. In fact, in the early days we had a program where we actually had sessions to help people who had fear of inverted roller coasters go through a series of sessions and then graduate to ride the Hulk roller coaster."

While the Incredible Hulk Coaster has held the title of the fastest roller coaster in Orlando for nearly 10 years, its unique design elements, exciting

story and thrilling twists and turns enable it to remain on or near the top of almost every list of the world's best roller coasters.

## Other Contenders

SeaWorld Orlando entered the game of speed when it premiered its first roller coaster, Kraken, in 2000. Topping out at 65 mph, it ties Test Track and winds up only two miles-per-hour short of the Incredible Hulk Coaster's maximum speed, not that riders will notice the small difference when zipping around its loops, dives and rolls. What Kraken lacks (barely) in speed is easily made up for in height, with its biggest drop reaching a stomach-churning 144 feet.

Aside from the differences in the details, the overall experiences of riding the Incredible Hulk Coaster and Kraken are very similar. Both offer nearly nonstop thrills throughout the roughly two-minute-long rides. If riders can maintain their composure, they are treated to spectacular views of the two theme parks. But ultimately it's the speed of these attractions that keeps guests coming back for more.

There are plenty of other fast vehicles visitors to Orlando can find, including stretch limosines-turned-roller coaster

cars in Rock 'n' Roller Coaster at Disney's Hollywood Studios, Dueling Dragons at Universal's Islands of Adventure and seemingly-ancient steam engine trains in Expedition Everest at Disney's Animal Kingdom, but none of these can match the speeds produced by Test Track, the experiences at the Walt Disney World Speedway, the Incredible Hulk Coaster, and Kraken, which hold the titles of the fastest-moving vehicle-based attractions currently in Orlando.

The ongoing thrill wars continue. SeaWorld is currently constructing Manta, a new roller coaster that, while maxing out at around 56 mph, will enhance the feeling of speed by placing riders into a "flying" laid-out position over water. Universal Studios is working on adding another intensely-fast roller coaster to its arsenal with its upcoming Hollywood Rip, Ride, Rock-It attraction reaching heights of up to 167 feet and a speed of around 65 mph.

Ever since Disney premiered Test Track in 1998, there has been a new atmosphere in Orlando asking who can build the fastest-moving car or roller coaster while still maintaining a general theme and story that's guaranteed to entertain thrill-seekers and onlookers alike.



**SeaWorld's Kraken ties Test Track as Orlando's second-fastest vehicle-based attraction at a top speed of 65 mph. Unlike Test Track, Kraken is all thrills from start to finish.**





## REV-UP an Appetite at NASCAR Sports Grille

Written By  
**Johnna  
Sternagel**

Photos By  
**Matt  
Roseboom**



**N**ASCAR Sports Grille at Universal CityWalk is not just another sports bar. Instead, its classy atmosphere (with subtle NASCAR touches), diverse menu and top-of-the-line television system makes it the perfect place for an indulgent sports-watching

and dining experience.

The establishment underwent a multimillion dollar renovation two years ago when it officially switched from Nascar Café to NASCAR Sports Grille. It's now a two-story establishment that features indoor seating for 450 guests and décor that includes hardwood

floors and a dark color scheme. The big draw is its high-tech AV system, which includes 54 televisions of different sizes, offering a good view of the game to every customer.

"We have the video wall, which encompasses three large screens," said Director of Operations Jimmy Carroll.



"I have three 10-foot TVs that are hung from the ceiling. We have in-booth TVs that allow guests to watch up to 14 feeds, which they can change themselves - kids can watch cartoons if they want while parents watch a game on another nearby television."

Another new option for kids (and big kids) is the large arcade on the Grille's second floor, accessible only from the inside of the restaurant, making it a safe place for kids to play. The arcade features a variety of video games, pool and more. Kids also play the games using prepaid cards, so there's no need to bug mom and dad for more quarters.

Aside from its televised entertainment, the restaurant offers a menu full of dishes that are served up in enormous proportions. Appetizers include options with appropriately themed names like Texas Speedway Taquitos (\$8.99) and Tower of O-Rings (\$7.29). For the ultimate in appetizers, try "The Big One," a sampler that feeds up to five people and features a smattering of wide wings, o-rings, fried cheese, chili con queso, and taquitos, plus five dipping sauces (\$17.29).

Entrees include the Brickyard Bacon-Onion Cheddar Burger (\$11.49), Speedway Chicken Caesar Salad (\$11.29) and BBQ Pulled-Pork Platter (\$13.79), but according to Carroll, there's one dish that's a particular favorite among both patrons and staff.

"We have the best ribs I've ever had," he said, describing the restaurant's \$21.49 Rubbin' is Racin' BBQ Ribs. "It's our sauce - we use a base barbecue sauce and it's both sweet and spicy. We have people ask for the sauce to dip their french fries into. It's a good quality product. The price is good and the portions are phenomenal."



**DOUBLE THE FUN:** NASCAR Sports Grille features two stories' worth of entertainment. Downstairs, guests can enjoy the restaurant's menu while watching programming on any of a number of television screens. The fun continues upstairs with more seating, a large arcade and another bar.





# Restaurant Report



Health-conscious vacationers also have multiple options, including garden burgers, mahi-mahi, salmon and various salads.

According to Carroll, the biggest misconception about NASCAR Sports Grille is that the place only broadcasts the Daytona 500 or other major car races. Actually the Grille televises a wide range of live sports for their customers, from NFL football and NHL hockey, to major international sports games.

"I think we do a pretty good job of crossing over to all sports," Carroll said. "It says 'NASCAR' on our restaurant, but I'd say the racing and the live shows we do here probably cover 20 percent of the sports we showcase. By being a sports grille we showcase every sport imaginable. The racing season starts in February and ends in November, but we've got Major League Baseball seven days a week, college basketball, hockey – every other sport. Football is far and away our largest draw."

Special sporting events, like playoffs, the Super Bowl and the Olympics are broadcast, as well as major international games. No matter what the sport, NASCAR Sports Grille aims to provide out-of-town guests with a place to watch it.

"Soccer is real big in the UK and sometimes we'll be full when there's a big game," he said.

They not only broadcast different sports, but are working to bring new sports experiences into the place. They've already held Nintendo Wii baseball tournaments for patrons and hope to hold Wii bowling tournaments in 2009. Different sections of the restaurant may also be rented out for private parties for groups of 15 or more, which can be themed to a specific sport, thanks to the variety of televisions on both the first and second story.

And, Carroll explained, there is one other advantage to dining there, whether it's with a group or just as a single party.

"When Universal does their fireworks, we're a front row seat," he said.

One of the most economical ways of dining at NASCAR Sports Grille is to either present your Universal Studios Annual Pass for a 20 percent discount, or to dine on CityWalk's Meal & Movie Deal. For \$21.95 per person, patrons can buy a pass that entitles them to a meal at one of CityWalk's restaurants (including NASCAR Sports Grille), plus a movie at the Universal Cineplex theater. The menu options are limited at all restaurants when using the Meal & Movie Deal, but include both an entrée and drink.

For a list of upcoming events, such as Wii tournaments, visit [NascarSportsGrille.com](http://NascarSportsGrille.com).



**A SHORT WALK:** NASCAR Sports Grille is located within eyesight of the Universal Studios theme park entrance.

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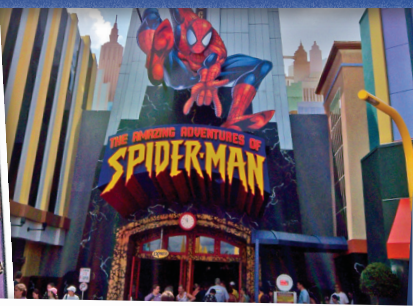
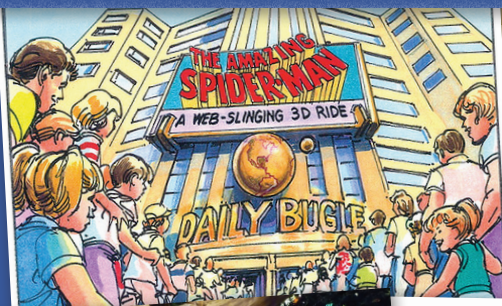
# Designing a Better, More Spectacular Attraction

Behind the Scenes with  
Some of the Industry's Top Designers

By Deborah Brauser

The concept for the entrance of The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man evolved only slightly from drawing to construction, retaining the setting of the Daily Bugle as the attraction's facade.

While it might take a single artist just a few hours to create art for the look of the interior of the T-Rex Cafe at Downtown Disney, it takes a team of skilled craftsmen to actually put it all together.



As you've stood in line for your favorite ride or show, have you ever thought about all the details that go into ensuring it comes together smoothly? Details such as safety protocols, mechanical working parts and even water effects have all been meticulously researched and installed, as part of the ride's overall design.

There are often hundreds of people involved with creating a new attraction. Many times, theme parks and restaurants take their initial idea and then turn to the experts to bring their vision to life. Other times, they may look to a ride designer to provide original concepts. Whatever the process, all the designers talked to for this story agree—collaboration and teamwork are key to turning out great projects that keep guests happy for years to come.

## Gary Goddard Entertainment Design

Based in North Hollywood, Calif., Gary Goddard Entertainment Design has been designing rides for more than 25 years, including some of Universal's most popular attractions. Chairman and Owner Gary Goddard has also produced Broadway shows, created Las Vegas productions, directed motion pictures and created several television series. "In all things, we really look for the emotional connection. We try to design rides and shows that will immerse people in an experience that engages them emotionally," he said.

Goddard uses the words positive and very collaborative when describing his relationship with former heads of Universal's Recreation Division, Jay Stein and Barry Upson. "From the time I started working there, first on the Conan

Sword and Sorcery Spectacular, then to Kongfrontation in L.A., then as part of the team that created the concepts and master plan for Universal Studios Florida, and then again for what became Universal's Islands of Adventure, the idea was to push the envelope. There was a true desire to create attractions that would be more immersive and edgier."

When Universal first approached Goddard about developing a ride based on *Jurassic Park* (Jurassic Park: The Ride at Universal Studios Hollywood in California and Jurassic Park River Adventure at Universal Orlando's Islands of Adventure), they were interested in creating a Jeep ride, which played a major part in the movie's script. It was a suggestion that Goddard wasn't keen on. "I told them that we can never do a Jeep ride as good as what

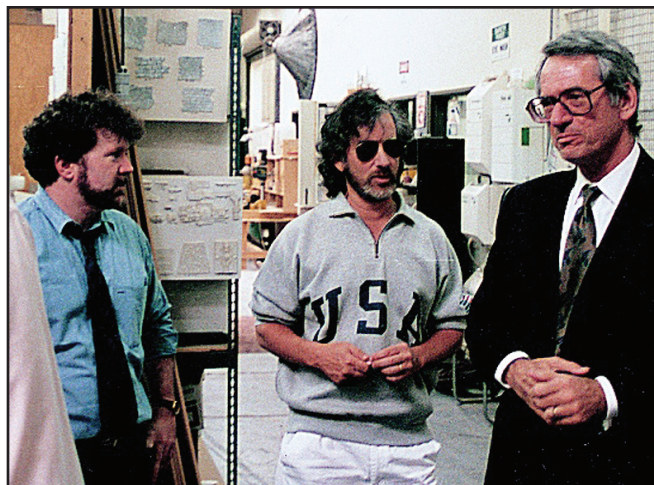


would be in the movie and we'd never meet the audience's expectations." He instead suggested a boat ride, based on a reference in the *Jurassic Park* book. "This would give the Studios a major water ride—something they desperately needed in Orlando at the time." Steven Spielberg, who was involved with the entire attraction process, "liked the boat ride concept, gave us input at several key stages and brought up a host of other great ideas."

After the concept was approved, and a large walk-through scale model built of the overall ride, Goddard was asked to develop another movie-related idea — one based on *Terminator 2* (*Terminator 2: 3-D* at Universal Studios). According to Goddard, when Stein said he wanted a stunt show in the old Conan theatre, Goddard was a little worried. "I had visions of some guy in a tinfoil suit battling an Arnold look-alike on a live stage and I knew that it would just never work. Plus, I knew (the movie's director) James Cameron would have to approve any concept — and he was way too smart to approve a typically cheesy theme park stunt show." After struggling with how to make it interesting, Goddard hit upon an idea. "An image of the T-1000 in its liquid metal form would come off the screen in 3-D. And then when it re-formed, it would become a real live actor in the T-1000 human mode and leap into the audience. I didn't yet know how we would achieve this, but I thought: if we can get that to happen believably, it would be really cool."

The Spider-Man ride concept (*The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man* at Universal's Islands of Adventure) was assigned to Goddard before the first Spider-Man movie came out. "I grew up on comic books, so I was elated to have this project." While analyzing what a super hero ride should be, he realized that it first of all had to have "in your face" action. But how could he translate the energy of a comic book into a ride? "I started thinking: what are the possibilities?" said Goddard. "An animatronic ride wouldn't be right — much too static and with limited

Gary Goddard (in blue) worked with director Steven Spielberg (middle) and former CEO & president of Universal Studios Sid Sheinberg during the *Jurassic Park* ride design process. Concept art (below) was used as a guide to create the attraction's overall layout and climax (below, right) which matches the artwork almost identically.





## Stories From the Frontline

After 25 years in the theme park business, Gary Goddard has had his share of “make ‘em or break ‘em” presentations for his ride concepts. Here, he recalls a couple that were surprisingly successful.

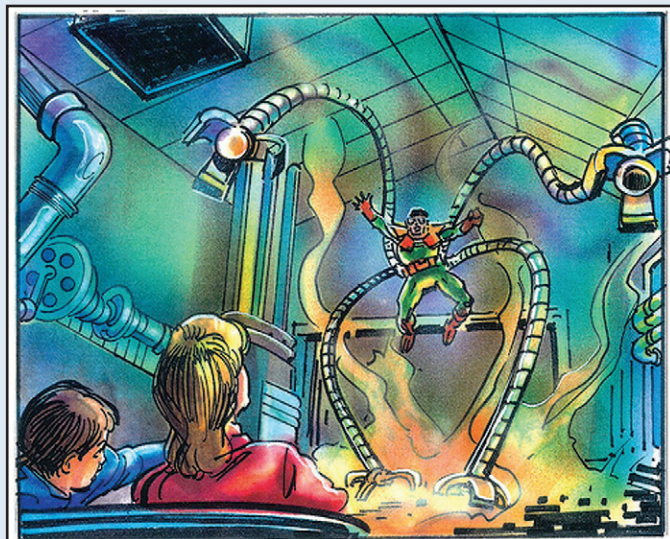


Gary Goddard poses on the Terminator 2: 3-D set with director James Cameron and actor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

### Terminator 2: 3-D

Working with Jay Stein (former head of Universal's Recreation Division), we developed a very strong concept, script and presentation. And because nothing could move forward unless James Cameron (Terminator 2 director) approved it, I was told that I'd be pitching it to him. So that day, I wasn't nervous until he entered the room. And then I suddenly realized: I'm going to be pitching this concept for a new attraction – something we called T2 3-D – to the guy who created the entire Terminator universe! And I suddenly felt a bit of pressure. But I pitched hard, with four walls of renderings and storyboard art. And after about 40 minutes, I was through and I'll never forget what happened next.

The room was silent. Everyone was waiting for Jim to say something. After a few moments of long silence, I felt I had to break the ice and started to speak – and Jim held his hand up, so I stopped mid-sentence. He got up and looked at the artwork and said, “These drawings are really good – who did them?” I told him and he looked a bit more. Then he turned around and said to the room, “You know, driving over here I was thinking: what kind of dumb idea are they going to show me? I arrived here fully prepared to tell you that it sucks. But I have to say, this is really good. The entire concept, the use of film and live actors, the transitions from film to live, and the story – you get it. The mythology is right.” And then after a moment, he added, “Not that I can't make it a little better.” Everyone laughed and the project moved ahead. And Cameron was right. He did improve things!



— And thru the hole comes DOCTOR OCTOPUS! He's furious that we've invaded his secret lair, and he lunges straight toward our vehicle. “Ah, hostages!” he sneers. “Just what the Doctor ordered!”

### The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man

Spider-Man was an attraction that few people believed in. It was a constant struggle to get that green lit. And we had no Spielberg or Cameron to fight for us. Again, Jay Stein believed in it and he allowed us to move ahead, step by step. At that time, many of his executives didn't think 3-D would work if you were in a moving ride conveyance. We had to actually spend a lot of money to set up a sound stage with three sets of twin 3-D projectors showing existing 3-D footage onto large screens. And then we pushed the executives around in little wheeled chairs. They wanted to see that when we moved them forward, backward and side to side, that the 3-D images would actually still work. And of course it did and we were allowed to carry on. Ultimately the ride was turned over to Scott Trowbridge to produce the project and he did a great job of bringing it to life. But we worked on the concept and design for over two years.

I still ride Spider-Man and go experience T2 3-D every time I'm in Orlando. And I have to say, they still work incredibly well. I love seeing audiences come out laughing and excited and really loving them. It's a great feeling.

motion.” He soon decided that 3-D was the way to go. “It was the only way to violate the ‘ride envelope’ (the safety zone around which no physical objects can penetrate for safety reasons) in a way that would make people react in the way I wanted. And it had big in your face action and big physical effects timed to the 3-D film. It's so cool to have done

these attractions almost a decade ago, and to know they are still being seen and loved by audiences of all ages.”

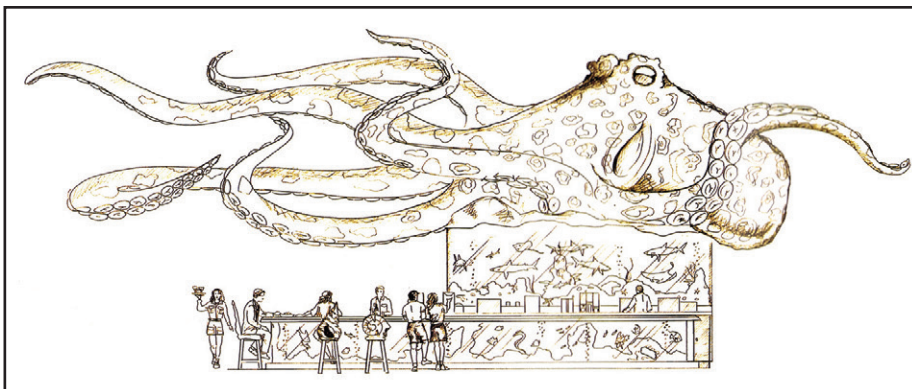
### — Daddona Studios —

Based out of Pompano Beach, Fla., Daddona Studios specializes in all aspects of themeing – for parks, restaurants, stores and more. This includes providing

all carpentry, welding, sculpting, mural painting and mechanical lighting needed to bring a theme to life. Their latest project has been providing many of the creatures found at the new T-Rex Café in Downtown Disney.

President Dan Daddona said today's guests are a bit more demanding and have come to expect an interesting





When a project is as big as building a restaurant with a dinosaur theme, even the tiniest details are planned during its initial conceptual stages. The art pictured above was used to plan the construction of the restaurant's bar area (above, middle). Seen in the bottom picture is the finished product.

experience while eating or shopping, as well as in the theme parks. "We basically grew with the themeing industry. And it's really because of Disney's influence. People started seeing that if they had a theme, their store or restaurant would do better. Today, if companies don't keep up with the expectations of the customers, they end up kind of falling

by the wayside."

Daddona first got involved with Steve Schussler of Schussler Creative, to help bring the first T-Rex Café concept to Kansas City. Landry's Restaurants soon stepped in to partner with Schussler, and then Disney gave them all a green light to bring the idea to Downtown Disney. "We worked with all the architects and

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If an attraction calls for pyrotechnics, there's a good chance that Andy Nicholls (above, at a pyro setup) was involved. He helped Indiana Jones feel the heat in the Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Show (left).

builders through these jobs, and it was just great. And for the most part, the restaurant here is bigger – with little enhancements here and there. For example, instead of doing four tentacles for the octopus like we did in Kansas City, we did eight here in Orlando. Overall, it's just been a lot of fun."

In addition to T-Rex, Daddona has also worked with Disney on a project at Epcot, made several sets for the Hollywood Studios Star Wars Weekends, and created several sculptural pieces for Animal Kingdom. "We always look at everything Disney does, because they always have the newest technologies and use them beyond anyone's capabilities," said Daddona. "Working with them is amazing. It's like getting to go to a Disney College!"

#### — Orlando Special Effects —

Speaking of the new T-Rex Café, Orlando Special Effects provided all of its outdoor flames and indoor fire effects. "We made sure the indoor effects will burn for 12 hours a day," said company President Andy Nicholls. "We were actually awarded with Disney's first indoor flame burn permit for the project."

Since 1990, this Florida-based company has provided special effects to the entertainment industry, as well as simulations and training for the military. Though they specialize in fire and pyrotechnic effects, they've been called upon to design and set up numerous

mechanical effects as well. "We did two shows for SeaWorld: a water ski show where they had a torpedo go astray and supposedly hit a set, causing a fireball to erupt.

"And then we did an indoor show about Atlantis, with the set falling down and water going everywhere, along with flame effects," said Nicholls. "We also provided some air can effects for the Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Show at Hollywood Studios several years ago, and all the flame effects and some of the scary gags at the old Skull Kingdom (formerly on International Drive)."

When asked why fire effects remain so popular, Nicholls replied, "Fire upstages everything we do and just grabs your attention. There are a lot of simulators out there, but I don't think anything can replace seeing the real thing and feeling real heat." They've been hired to produce fireballs, explosions, smoke effects and even a backyard volcano.

"There are a lot of safety concerns involved with even a simple fire feature," cautions Nicholls. "That's why when someone hires me for the effect, they're also getting someone who'll follow the standards and answer to the fire marshals and authorities to make sure it all goes off without a hitch."

#### — Jack Rouse Associates —

Dan Schultz, executive vice president with Jack Rouse Associates out of Cincinnati, Ohio, said his company specializes in creating environments.

Whether they're for theme parks, museums, sports venues or corporate visitor centers, "We basically create an immersive environment that gives people the chance to have fun while they're learning."

Just some of the projects they've worked on in the Central Florida area include Fievel's Playground, Curious

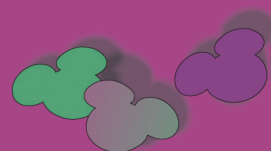


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George Goes to Town and A Day in the Park with Barney play areas at Universal Studios (as well as some of the streetscapes there), the exhibits and attractions at Daytona USA, and exhibits on Early Space Exploration at Kennedy Space Center.

"It's always a collaboration with Universal Studios or with any of our amazing clients," said Schultz. Most have some ideas about what they want to do, but with our background and our experience, we can join with them and come up with creative ideas that we fine tune together. At the end of the day, you're both looking to do what's best from the guest's point of view."

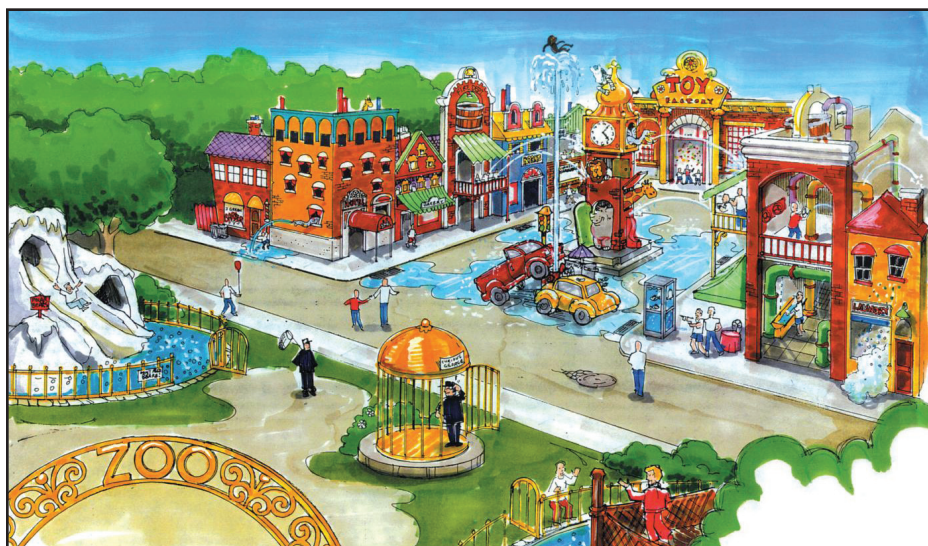
### Future Trends

So what are some of the trends for rides in the future? To make them bigger, faster, and louder? To make them more immersive? Or is it searching for the next "completely different" feature?

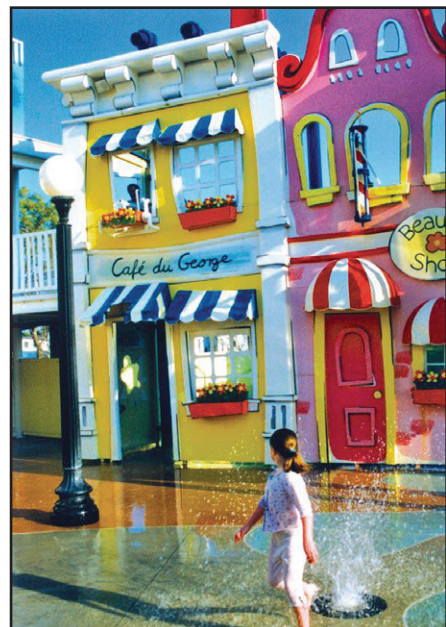
Mike West, director and executive producer of the Creative Studio at Universal, and executive producer for The Simpsons Ride at Universal Studios, said the challenge for parks will be "pulling people away from their interactivity at home. Though they can have fun with thousands of people online, it's still an isolated experience. I think what we provide is the opportunity to laugh and share that excitement and that fun with family and friends and even strangers. That's a whole different kind of experience.

"The immersive experience brings people out," he added. "We can offer a 3-D experience in an 85-foot dome that shows The Simpsons projected 50 feet in front of you. You can't do that at home. Plus, there will always be a demand for a thrilling coaster or a classic dark ride. But I think we'll see more of a demand to mix them, like with The Mummy at Universal. It's a little bit of a dark ride and then a little bit of a theatrical experience. Then all of a sudden, holy smokes – it's a coaster."

In the future, West would like to figure out a way for guests who don't



Universal Studios' Curious George Goes to Town play area required extensive artistic planning to ensure its cartoon feeling came across in real-life.



want the coaster effects, to still be able to enjoy them. "We need to look at a way to give guests or families with young children the option to be able to walk through these rides and experience the interesting theatrical parts, without having to worry about the thrill ride parts. Shrek does that a little bit with the seats that don't move down in the front. It would be nice to see that in some of our 3-Dimensional set attractions as well. Oh, and I think a goal to shoot for would be a 3-D theater without glasses. From a guest's standpoint, I think it would be so magical to sit there and have things jump off the screen without having to put on the special glasses."

Goddard agrees that the trend will

continue towards including more 3-D/4-D effects, "as we've only just scratched the surface on this." But ultimately, he doesn't think future rides should be just about the technology. "I think a great attraction, whether you're talking about Spider-Man or Pirates of the Caribbean, or the Haunted Mansion – they all started with an idea for a journey, a story, an adventure. And as they looked at how best to realize that story, the technologies were then developed to make it all happen. So yes to being more immersive, yes to more and bigger effects, and yes to finding something completely different. But first, figure out what the journey's about. Finding the perfect melding of all these points leads to great rides."



## Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground

Enticing guests with backwoods charm for over 30 years.

By Deborah Brauser

**L**ocated just down Bay Lake from Disney's Magic Kingdom, the Fort Wilderness Resort and Campground is unlike other properties in the area. This comfortably rustic resort is tucked into the woods, nestled among tall pines, bay trees and palmettos. Here, there's plenty to entertain both the back-to-nature lover, as well as those who want more conveniences.

With vehicles restricted, the grounds are full of bicycles, golf carts, walkers and horseback riders. From the Reception Outpost's check-in lobby with an oversized fireplace and game tables, to its lively town center area surrounding Pioneer Hall, there's a distinct feeling of being in a small community, complete with friendly neighbors and fun amenities meant for sharing with new friends. It's a combination that's been successful for more than three decades.

Since 1971, Fort Wilderness has been welcoming guests to its tree-lined campground. And though a few things have changed – the steam engine train is long gone, as is the Melvin the Moose Breakfast Show – the resort still attracts families for numerous repeat visits.

Lisa Egan of Powder Springs, Ga. grew up in Florida and stayed with her parents in campers and cabins at the campground several times as a kid. She's now vacationed here twice with her husband and 7- and 4-year-old sons. "There's a lot to do here such as horseback riding and the



singalong with Chip 'N Dale. You can even watch the Magic Kingdom fireworks right from the beach by the marina with no crowds. I just like the convenience of its location, while still feeling like I'm away from it all."

When the property first opened, it had six accommodation "loops" and 232 campsites. Today, it stretches out over 700 acres with 28 loops, 784 campsites for tents and recreational vehicles, and 409 Wilderness cabins.

### Accommodations

With street names such as Dogwood Drive and Possum Path, the Wilderness cabins are located in the quieter areas near the main entrance. Each of these enchanting "cabins in the woods" has more than 500 square feet of living space, including a full-sized bed and a set of bunk beds; a separate living room with a full-sized pull-down bed, cable TV with a DVD player and a kitchen stocked with a full-sized refrigerator, microwave and stove. Outside features include



a private patio deck, a charcoal grill and a picnic table. (Not exactly roughing it, is it?)

Dan Thomas of Tyrone, Penn., has stayed at the Campground seven times over the past 10 years with his wife, two sons (who are now grown) and daughter (who is now 14). And they plan on returning again in February. "The cabins are the best by far for atmosphere and theme. You get so much for your money versus a room with two beds at other places. It gives the kids the privacy they seek from the parents with separate TVs, yet you can be a family and have a sit-down meal together."

Egan said that traveling with her two young sons makes staying in the cabins especially appealing. "They're clean and nice, and having a full kitchen is very helpful. We also like the peace and quiet of the campground. You don't hear the people next to you like you do in a hotel type room."

The campsites are available for travel trailers, motorhomes and tents and feature paved pads, a charcoal grill and picnic table, and hookups for water, electric, sewer, TV and internet.

Many campsite residents contribute to the neighborhood feeling by decorating their temporary homes, especially during the holidays. Around Halloween, black and orange abounds. And once December hits, the areas become small Christmas villages full of twinkling lights, colorful inflatable lawn decorations, and Santas and Mickeys of all sizes and shapes. "We like that people decorate their campers and cabins for the holidays," said Egan, who was inspired to join in the fun. "We even brought a Mickey Mouse inflatable to put outside our cabin this year."

Air-conditioned comfort stations are scattered throughout the campsites with restrooms, private showers, laundry facilities and ice dispensers. Basic groceries, camping supplies, movie rentals and even Disney merchandise



*Fort Wilderness features 409 cabins within its 700 acres. One of the most popular and fun ways to get around the property is via golf cart.*



*An almost endless supply of activities captivates guests throughout the Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground, from land to the water.*

can be found at the Meadow Trading Post and at the Settlement Trading Post, just across from the marina.

## **Recreation**

No matter where you stay, everyone is welcome to use all onsite amenities, including its two heated pools. The larger one is located in the Meadow Recreation Area in the center of Fort Wilderness, along with a kiddie pool, snack bar, Daniel Boone's Wilderness

Arcade and two lighted tennis courts. The smaller pool can be found near the cabins on the southwest end of the property.

The Settlement Recreation Area is on the far north end, next to Bay Lake and its bustling marina. Lawn chairs, tetherball matches and a steady stream of touch football games can be found along the white sand beach at almost any time. (Depending on when the boats come in from their jaunts back and forth to



the Magic Kingdom, it can also become one of the most crowded areas of the campground.)

Watercraft rentals at the marina includes canoes, kayaks, and pontoon boats, along with water skiing and fishing excursions. In addition to seeing the Magic Kingdom's nightly fireworks display, guests can also get a great view of the nightly Electrical Water Pageant boat parade from the beach area.

## Horses, Of Course

According to one of the ranch hands taking care of the pony rides, the resort houses about 90 horses of different types, including the draught horses used to pull the trolleys down Main Street U.S.A. in the Magic Kingdom. The pony rides, which are located in the corral at the Tri-Circle-D Ranch, cost only a couple dollars for a short, very calm stroll around the stables. (By the way, the petting zoo used to be located at the Ranch, but signs are now up asking guests to just walk around the corral and enjoy the ponies there without petting or feeding them.)

Horseback riding enthusiasts can take part in a wrangler-guided trail

ride, which is offered several times daily. For around \$35 per group, horse-drawn carriages carry guests on relaxing half-hour excursions. Reservations are highly recommended.

A cheaper alternative is an old-fashioned 45-minute wagon ride on a first-come, first-served basis for only \$8 for everyone over 10-years-old, \$5 for children aged 3 to 9, and free for children under three.

Thomas remembers a wagon ride around Halloween five years ago that made a lasting impression. As the driver told the story of the headless horseman, he actually made an appearance near the end of the ride. "We were seated in the back of the wagon and the horseman began to chase after us," recalls Thomas. "It was a real man on a real horse, holding a pumpkin head under his arm.

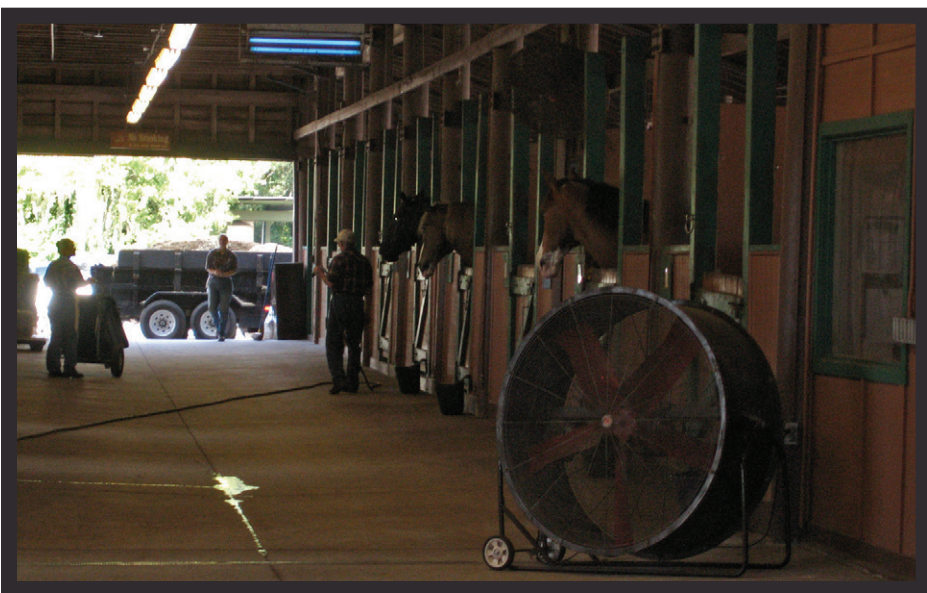
He got so close to the wagon, you could actually see the breath of the horse near your face. It was really cool and my daughter was scared and amazed by the whole event." The headless horseman character still appears at the Campground each Halloween season. He's just now part of the Haunted Carriage Ride.

## Transportation

With vehicles restricted just past check-in, the resort's buses are vital. They pick up and drop off guests at external destinations such as the Disney theme parks and waterparks, as well as all internal locations.

But what if you'd like to explore the property without having to wait for a bus? Walking along one of the many winding trails is one option, as is bicycling. Guests often bring their own or rent them at the Bike Barn. The most popular mode of transportation on site, however, is the electric cart – also rented out at the Bike Barn. "I always rent a golf cart for the entire trip," said Thomas. "You don't have to get one. The bus service will get you anywhere you need to be. But cart rentals are dad's fun toy."

Lisa Egan believes the carts are essential for her stays. "We have young kids, so we always rent a golf cart. There can be a lot of walking to and from the bus stops, or you can drive your cart right to the marina or to the bus depot. They're expensive, but they do come in handy. And after a long day at the parks, that cart is a welcomed sight."



*The Tri-Circle-D Ranch is home to the horses found up and down Main Street U.S.A. in the Magic Kingdom. There, visitors can see how these horses are cared for when they're not entertaining theme park guests.*





## The Hoop-Dee-Do Musical Revue

For pure country fun, catch one of these nightly dinner hoe-downs at the Pioneer Hall. The program provides Wild West music and laughs, along with an all-you-can-eat menu of country comfort food such as fried chicken and smoked BBQ ribs. The original version of this show opened in 1974. After all these years, it's still going strong and can fill up fast. So make your reservations in advance.

For a true splurge, there's also a new two-hour Segway tour called "The Wilderness Back Trail Adventure" for guest over 16 years old. (See the full story about this experience on page 39).

## Chow Time

The area surrounding Pioneer Hall has become a natural gathering spot for guests. There, you can join a group playing horseshoes, mingle, or take it easy in one of the oversized wooden rockers on the building's porches. In addition,

the area boasts a small gift shop, Davy Crockett's Wilderness Arcade, and most of the resort's dining options.

Located inside Pioneer Hall, the casual, full-service Trail's End Restaurant offers an all you-can-eat buffet for all three meals, plus snacks and beverages into the late evening. Crockett's Tavern offers appetizers, pizza, and a full service bar. The very popular Hoop-Dee-Do Musical Revue is also located here.

When asked to name his favorite part of Fort Wilderness, Thomas replied,

"It's not just one thing, but a combination of the music from the Hoop-Dee-Do, the food at Trail's End, and the old time movies with Chip 'N Dale at the campfire. I look at Disney as a really great place - and my children grew up going here."

Egan agreed, "I think this is a great option for families with kids. "It's not like staying in a five-star hotel. It's more laid back, which after a day at the parks is appreciated. We love staying here and will definitely do it again."



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# AROUND THE WORLD ON A SEGWAY

BY JULIE SAUNDERS

**I**went around the world on a Segway – make that around World Showcase at Epcot.

Epcot offers a two-hour Around the World at Epcot tour during which riders cruise around World Showcase before that area of the park is open to the public. There are age and weight restrictions, but as long as you are at least 16 years of age and between 100 and 250 pounds, you too could zip around on a Segway.

The \$95 tour can be reserved for the current calendar year and space is limited to 10 guests per session, so it's best to book early. Epcot admission is also required.

If two hours and open riding seem a bit ambitious, Epcot also offers a shorter Simply Segway tour, which costs \$35 and only includes the one-hour indoor portion of the experience. Simply Segway is offered at 11:30 a.m. daily.

In case you are wondering, a Segway is a mobility device consisting of two wheels, a small platform, and a connecting pole leading up to the controls and handlebars. Two wheels? How do riders keep from falling over? Segway technology uses gyroscopes, microprocessors and tilt sensors inside the wheels, which take care of the balancing act. The Segway makes adjustments to balance the rider 100 times per second. All you have to do is step aboard and slightly lean forward to go forwards, lean back to go backwards, or pull the handlebars in the direction you want to turn. Just remember to straighten the handlebars again – otherwise, you will resemble the inner-workings of a blender.

Once in the training room, participants are fitted with bicycle helmets and then watch a short video about the Segway. Afterwards, two instructors go over the workings of the Segway

and demonstrate some of the do's and don'ts of Segway operation. Next, it's time to mount up and begin getting acquainted with your own Segway.

Stepping up onto the Segway's platform is a lot like stepping onto the scale at your doctor's office, only this platform moves. But not to worry, the gyroscopes inside the Segway counter your every move, keeping the platform level and you steady. Just look straight ahead, grasp the handlebars, and step aboard one foot at a time. It is that easy.

Now, it is time to get going. The instructors talk you through your every move – leaning forward to move forward and standing straight up to stop. You will even do the twist. After mastering the basic moves, it is time to tackle the slalom course where you weave in and out of (and sometimes over) little orange cones. Once that level of skill and comfort is achieved, you do some ramp work, including stepping off your Segway and helping it over a bump. All of this training takes about an hour and then it is time to hit the road.

Upon exiting Innoventions, you play a giant game of follow the leader as your instructors (one leading, and the other bringing up the rear), head for World Showcase, which you tour clockwise, starting with Mexico and ending in



JULIE SAUNDERS & HER SON HARRISON POSE ON SEGWAYS IN FRONT OF THE SEVEN SEAS LAGOON & SPACESHIP EARTH.

Canada. After only a few minutes outside, the class becomes increasingly confident in their skills and the pace picks up, although the Segways are equipped to keep you from breaking any speed limits. Aside from some numbing foot-fatigue from standing in the same spot on the platform for so long, it is a joy to cruise along and take in an empty World Showcase in the morning.

Along the way, you wind through narrow Japanese gardens, complete with the cute little arched bridges, which do not look as cute from atop a Segway, and even go through doorways. Riders also practice their slalom skills among the columns of buildings, such as the replica of the doge's palace in Italy. There's even a photo opportunity in Italy, with Spaceship Earth in the background.

After exploring various nooks and crannies throughout World Showcase, the tour ends up where it began – in the training room. Riders roll back inside Innoventions and park their steeds for the next class. Along with lasting memories, you will take with you a wicked case of helmet hair, but it is well worth it for such a unique and enjoyable experience.

TO BOOK ANY OF DISNEY'S SEGWAY TOURS, CALL 407-WDW-TOUR. TOURS RUN DAILY.



# THROUGH THE WILDERNESS ON A SEGWAY

BY RICKY BRIGANTE

**I**traversed the wilderness on a Segway – make that traversed through Disney's Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground.

Like the Around the World at Epcot Segway tour, the Wilderness Back Trail Adventure takes guests on a two-hour trip around Walt Disney World property on a Segway Personal Transporter. However, a trip around the trails of Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground requires a bit more power and traction than gliding through the paved streets of Epcot. To easily navigate the more rustic paths, the Segway X2 model is used and equipped with deeply treaded, all-terrain tires.

The age and weight restrictions are the same for the Wilderness Back Trail Adventure, but the cost is less at \$85 per person (including tax). No additional costs are involved, though riders must have a way of reaching the Fort Wilderness, located roughly five minutes from the Magic Kingdom parking lot. Disney's complimentary bus transportation will get you there, but it's much faster if you have a car handy.

Upon arriving at Fort Wilderness, would-be adventurers must board one of the resort's bus lines (of which there are three) to reach the backside of the resort, known as The Settlement Recreation Area. It will take 10 to 20 minutes to reach this area from the main entrance, so arriving to the resort at least 30 minutes ahead of your tour's start time is recommended.

At The Settlement, guests walk a short scenic path to Mickey's Backyard BBQ where the Back Trail Adventure guides are waiting. The tour begins with a short Segway training session. Unlike the Epcot tour, the Back Trail Adventure training is outdoors and lasts 30 minutes or

less, depending on the experience level of the group. Once everyone is comfortable with maneuvering on various bumpy terrains, up and down hills, and ducking under tree branches, the tour begins.

While Epcot's tour takes guests around the concrete-filled World Showcase, the Back Trail Adventure is all about nature. Guests ride along the many lengthy nature trails of Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground, learning about the foliage and wildlife that surround them. It's not unheard of to see a variety of birds and possibly a few deer along the way.

Briskly traveling on a Segway along nature trails is surprisingly relaxing. Throughout the tour, there are many opportunities to ride without stopping for several minutes at a time. The soft hum of the Segway quickly fades into the background as the controls become more second-nature, allowing riders to simply enjoy the environment and take in the scenery.

The entire tour isn't spent staring only at trees. One of Fort Wilderness' paths leads into the campground area, where riders weave up and down the paved streets lined with RVs. It's especially appealing to tour this area during the Halloween and Christmas seasons, during which campers have decorated their vehicles and plots for the seasons. The



RICKY BRIGANTE & ANDY GODFREY POSE ON SEGWAYS IN FRONT OF BAY LAKE, SPACE MOUNTAIN & CINDERELLA CASTLE.

tour also leads guests along the shores of Bay Lake for a picturesque view of Cinderella Castle in the distance.

Tour guests also have an opportunity to ride through the grounds of the Wilderness Lodge (a separate Disney resort from the Fort Wilderness Resort & Campground). As an added treat, guests are guided to the Tri-Circle-D Ranch & Farm for a short rest and to visit the stables containing many of the horses seen trotting up and down the Magic Kingdom's Main Street U.S.A.

In the end, the tour winds back to Mickey's Backyard BBQ where guests leave with a unique trading pin to commemorate their trip on Disney's Back Trail Adventure.

Disney's Segway tours offer guests a chance to not only see a few sights they may otherwise have missed, but also to take in some of the beauty that is scattered throughout Disney property. The Back Trail Adventure gives guests the opportunity to take a step away from the seemingly-endless walks through Disney's theme parks and instead glide along more serene paths, letting a comforting breeze provide some necessary relaxation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SEGWAY, GO TO [WWW.SEGWAY.COM](http://WWW.SEGWAY.COM).



# Hangin' Around Orlando

## New Attraction Offers a 'Zip' Through Untouched Florida Ecosystems

Written By Ricky Brigante Photography by Matt Roseboom

**W**ith seven world-class theme parks, four outstanding water parks, and countless rides and shows, you'd think that Orlando had it all, but not quite. Florida EcoSafaris at Forever Florida recently premiered a one-of-a-kind experience that's not only unique to the Orlando area, but to the world.

The new Zipline Safari at Forever Florida brings guests on a two and a half hour adventure through a 4,700 acre wildlife conservation area. Matt Duda, Florida EcoSafaris' director of sales and marketing, described it as a treetop nature tour. "You're literally 55 feet off the ground zipping from canopy to canopy along these nine observation platforms and along the way, you get to experience the wildlife, three different ecosystems, spot animals, and learn about all the magic that is Forever

Florida."

The term "zip line" is often used loosely to describe any activity that involves traversing an inclined length of cable, generally high in the air, via a pulley system with gravity propelling the rider. In the case of Florida EcoSafaris' new Zipline Safari, the zip line tour is part of an "engineered course" built by a company called Experience Based Learning (EBL), who has been designing and building such courses since 2002.

Generally, zip lines are set up between two high points, connected to tall trees, cliffs or among a mountainous terrain. Based on this fact, you can easily understand the problem encountered building a zip line adventure on Florida's mostly flat land. "We're really excited about our zip line because it's the first and only one of its kind being built on flat terrain," Duda said. "It's done with a pole system which has a series of nine platforms. Each of the runs, or

zips, is connected and [also features] two different sky bridges." The end result is "the first and only true zip line course in Florida."

Forever Florida is located roughly an hour east of Kissimmee, in the city of St. Cloud. When driving to Forever Florida, the T-shirt shops along Highway 192 quickly fade into nothing but tree-filled land surrounding the roads. "You don't find 4,700 acre wildlife conservation areas in the middle of the city," added Duda, "so once people make that little trek down to see us, they're rewarded well by seeing these unique ecosystems."

The various ecosystems encountered among the conservation area include pine flat woods and plenty of wetlands. Among the seemingly-endless land, it's quite common to spot a wide variety of wildlife. More than 200 species of birds, black bears, bobcats, alligators, Spanish Colonial cattle, and even the endangered Florida panther are just some of the many animals that can be found throughout Forever Florida.

Florida EcoSafaris features three different experiences. Their coach safari takes guests on a two-hour vehicle-based excursion. Horseback tours are from one to three hours and take guests along historic trails dating back to the 1500s. But it is the new Zipline Safari that is shaping up to be the most fun way to sight-see through their ecosystems. Throughout seven separate zips, guests traverse nearly a mile of course, surrounded by nothing but nature.

The Zipline Safari costs \$85 for adults



**One of EcoSafaris' guides connects a young visitor to the zip line in preparation for his trip to the next platform (seen in the distance on the right).**



and children. To take part, guests must be at least 10 years old and weigh between 70 and 275 pounds. Why the weight limit? Riders under 70 pounds run the risk of not making it across the zip line, requiring one of Florida EcoSafaris' tour guides to shimmy out onto the line to rescue them. Riders exceeding the weight limit may not be able to safely stop upon reaching the end of each zip line and with the longest line measuring roughly 750 feet and reaching speeds of up to 20 mph, an improper stop would not be a pleasant experience. Fortunately, those who fit within the weight requirements will find the ride to be very comfortable, as both the increase and decrease in speed are governed by the pull of gravity on the riders own weight, rather than sudden stops caused by springs or nets found on other zip lines around the world.

To begin the experience, guests are fitted with a helmet and a harness that wraps around the waist and both legs and depart in groups. All pockets must be emptied of loose items and cameras must be small and securely fastened at all times. For those worried about dropping their cameras, a helmet-mounted video camera option is available for an additional fee.

Since the terrain over which the zip lines run is almost totally flat, guests are required to climb several flights of stairs to reach the top of the first platform. From there, the first zip line run is the shortest of the seven, allowing riders (and their stomachs) to get acquainted to the idea of stepping off of a platform nearly 50 feet in the air and surrendering their lives to a harness. It's not nearly as bad as it sounds. In fact, that first step is quite exhilarating.

Safety is very important to Florida EcoSafaris. Before anyone steps onto or off a platform, harnesses are checked and re-checked. Anyone that is not getting prepared to zip is connected to safety cables throughout the platforms. Those who are about to zip are disconnected from the platform cables and connected to the zip line via a pulley. Just before taking the big step off, the tour guides at



**All it takes to safely bring guests between platforms is a harness and pulley. Once equipped, guests cross the first zip line within minutes.**

either end of the zip line run through a verbal ritual of sorts, ensuring that both ends are ready. Guests always move at their own pace and are consistently made to feel comfortable by the entertaining personalities possessed by Florida EcoSafaris' tour guides.

Once riders make it across the first brief zip line, the rest become progressively easier to handle and thus more fun. Two of the seven zips take riders from the platform almost all the way to the ground, allowing for the longest and fastest runs. While obstacles are not intentional, they do exist along a couple of the zip lines. In one instance, guides instruct riders to tuck into a "cannonball" position after leaving the platform, to avoid bumping a nearby tree that they did not want to cut down or relocate during construction. While a bump would not likely injure the tree or the rider, it would result in plenty of uncomfortable spinning for the duration of the zip run.

The act of zipping through nature 50 feet in the air is surprisingly relaxing. Once the initial shock of stepping off the platform wears off, floating across the zip lines is not as much thrilling as it is uniquely entertaining. Literally having a bird's eye view of the surrounding environment provides a perspective



on the world like no other in the area. Unlike speeding around in a roller coaster, casually gliding on a zip line provides riders a few brief moments to just look around and take in the natural sights and sounds of Florida.

In all, the tour contains a total of just a few minutes of actual zip time. The rest of the scheduled two and one half hours is spent standing on the platforms, taking in the scenery, and waiting for the remainder of the tour group to zip. Guides stationed on each platform are trained to answer questions about the surrounding land and wildlife.

Amongst the technological marvels found in Orlando's theme parks, Florida EcoSafaris has succeeded in taking tourism back to its basics, bringing guests out of a concrete jungle and into a natural environment. "Florida EcoSafaris is a true eco-tourism attraction," said Duda. "Thirty percent of the revenues that come from Florida EcoSafaris actually go back to support the conservation effort. That's what makes us true eco-tourism. We're here to support saving these lands – these special nine ecosystems – to make sure that future generations can enjoy them."

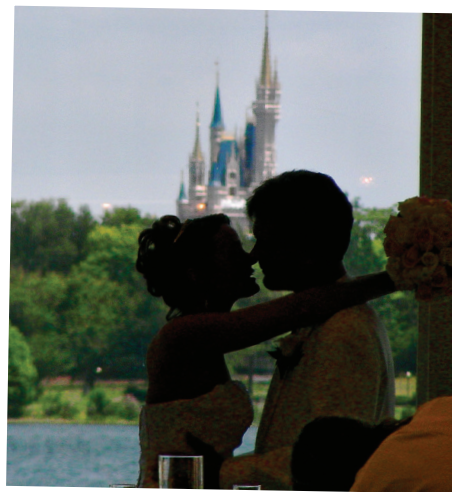


# Happily Ever After

Tales of fairy tale theme park romances.

By Julie Saunders

**F**airy tale beginnings evoke romance when “once upon a time” could be a first meeting, engagement or wedding at a variety of theme park venues. Couples yearn for magical memories of these milestones in their lives and often personalize their proposals and weddings to match their interests. This is especially true of theme park fans, where brides and grooms transform into Cinderella and Prince Charming – if only for a day.



*Amy & Steve Souden kiss in front of Cinderella Castle after their wedding. Photo by Matt Roseboom.*

**D**estination weddings are extremely popular, offering the convenience of combining the wedding ceremony and honeymoon in one location. Theme park, resort and cruise weddings offer a mini-vacation for families and friends of the happy couple. From elegant formal weddings to intimate sunset ceremonies, Central Florida provides the perfect backdrop for a couple's special day.

Among destinations offering wedding venues, Walt Disney World has established itself as the gold standard of theme park weddings, offering the largest selection of locations in a wide price range – with an average cost of \$29,000 for 80 guests.

From intimate gatherings to the sky's the limit, Disney's team of wedding consultants assists couples with everything from site selection to resort reservations for wedding guests. “We perform 1,600 ceremonies yearly and our staff gets to know the couples so they can deliver a highly personal

experience,” said Korri McFann Spolar, worldwide marketing and business development director of Disney's Fairy Tale Weddings & Honeymoons.

Venues run from barefoot-on-the-beach to theme park locations. Most popular is the crown jewel of venues, Disney's wedding pavilion. Spolar advised, “Epcot is also very popular – especially Italy, France and China.”

“The pavilion gives couples an elegant indoor setting with the romance of Cinderella Castle visible in the distance,” said George Aguel, vice president resort sales, planning and development, Walt Disney Attractions. “It has all the essence of a fairy tale,” added Spolar.

The key to themed proposals and weddings is to make the event personal and relevant to the couple. The following collection of several couples' experiences paints a picture of possibilities for creating a unique and memorable life event. **And yes – they all lived happily ever after.**

## STARTING WITH AN ANNIVERSARY

*Marcus D'Amelio  
& Marcia Bauer  
of Ocala and Orlando*

Strangers until attending Epcot's 25th anniversary celebration (Volume 1, issue 1 of *Orlando Attractions Magazine*), Marcus and Marcia met while heading to Soarin' on Sept. 30, 2007. They spent the day together, which Marcus described as, “one of the best Disney experiences I ever had.”

The next day Marcus spotted Marcia waiting for Epcot's 25th anniversary rededication to begin. He made his way to her side to share the ceremony and later shared a tiny umbrella during a downpour.

Within a week they had their first date at Epcot, were engaged last May 26, and are planning a fall wedding. Both are grateful to have found true love in a crowd of Disney fans. “Disney is an important part of my life. It's necessary that my soul mate ‘gets’ me,” explained Marcia.



*Photo courtesy of Marcus D'Amelio.*



## SMILE AND SAY YES

*Sarah Ayres & Tom Bricker  
of Valparaiso, Ind.*

Introduced by a mutual friend, it took Tom three months to ask Sarah for a date. Afterwards, they became inseparable and made several trips to Orlando, rekindling their childhood love of Walt Disney World.

Tom began planning a surprise proposal months ahead of their November 2007 trip. He wanted an impressive proposal to awe Sarah, "Given our mutual affection for Disney World, there was no better option for something elaborate."

Following a romantic dinner at Narcoossee's, the couple walked along the beach to Disney's Polynesian Resort to watch Magic Kingdom's fireworks. Tom, an avid photographer, brought his camera and tripod under the guise of taking posed couple photos during the Holiday Wishes fireworks show.

With the shutter set to take a series of 10 photos, Tom dropped to one knee, proposing to Sarah during the grand finale. They plan to marry after graduating from Valparaiso University in June 2010 and will honeymoon at Disney's Polynesian Resort, followed by a Disney cruise.

Regarding the importance of a mutual passion for Disney, Tom and Sarah agree, "It's a great thing to share and we hope [it] will remain an important aspect of our lives as we raise children and grow old together."

## GOLDEN HONEYMOON

*Matt & Jessica (Jessie)  
Pezzula of Lakeland*

For their first date, Matt and Jessie met for coffee, but talked so long their date continued through dinner. Married in 2005, the Pezzulas chose an all-inclusive package for their Walt Disney World honeymoon at Disney's Caribbean Beach Resort.

The then-offered "Gold" package included everything the Pezzulas wanted, "We had a great dining plan



*Sparks flew when Tom Bricker proposed to Sarah Ayers on Nov. 15, 2007. Photo by Tom Bricker.*

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All Disney weddings require a minimum four-night resort stay.

The Magic Kingdom is reservable for \$25,000 and weddings must conclude before park opening.

Cinderella's glass coach and white ponies rent for \$2,750 and will travel as far as Epcot or the Yacht Club from the Wedding Pavilion.

**Details at [disneyweddings.go.com](http://disneyweddings.go.com) or call (321) 939-4610. Disney Honeymoon Advisors provide assistance with resort selection, spa treatments and honeymoon registry. Visit [disneyweddings.com](http://disneyweddings.com) or call (800) 370-6009.**

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with three sit down meals per day – including dinner at the Hoop-Dee-Do Musical Revue – tickets to Cirque De Soleil and a roped off viewing area for Magic Kingdom fireworks."

Jessie observed, "As a couple our interests are very different. I really want to travel and see the world and Matt likes rides, so Walt Disney World has something for each of us."



*Photo courtesy of Matt & Jessie Pezzula.*





*Zombie characters look on as Joshua Bauer proposes to Mary Jane Golden at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay. Photo by Busch Gardens.*

## HORRIFIC PROPOSAL

*Joshua Bauer &  
Mary Jane Golden  
of Gainesville*

Mary Jane was surprised by her boyfriend of three years, Joshua, at Zombie Junctions in Busch Gardens Tampa Bay's Howl-O-Scream when Joshua gallantly dropped to his knee and asked her to marry him amid blood splattered zombie characters on Oct. 25, 2008. After she said, "Yes," Joshua remarked, "I wanted to make sure you remembered this."

Joshua and Mary Jane share a love of theme parks and horror movies. Combining both in a proposal was an inspiration. Joshua explained, "It's because of similarities that we work so well together." Mary Jane added, "Theme parks are an essential part of the moral fabric that holds our modern society together. Oh, and zombies – who doesn't love zombies?"



*Bob and Severina Jones retie the knot Jan. 2 at Walt Disney World. Photo by Randy Chapman.*

## RENEWAL AT DISNEY

*Bob & Severina Jones  
of Hermitage, Tenn.*

Married 41 years, Bob and Severina's children suggested their parents renew their wedding vows during the family's annual vacation to Disney World. "We like to visit Disney World in early January. The decorations are still up, so it makes the holidays last longer, plus it's a good time for our family to get away," they explained.

Bob saw a vow renewal as an unique opportunity, "I was in the Army when we were married, so I didn't get to participate in the planning. Our vow renewal was a great opportunity for me to have a hand in our ceremony at last."

The ceremony was held Jan. 2 at Picture Point – adjacent to Disney's wedding pavilion. "We had 36 guests from California to Cape Cod, so we wanted a central location. What more perfect place than Disney World?" said Severina.

*Did you have a romantic vacation at one of Orlando's many theme parks? Send your story and pictures to us at [info@attractionsmagazine.com](mailto:info@attractionsmagazine.com).*

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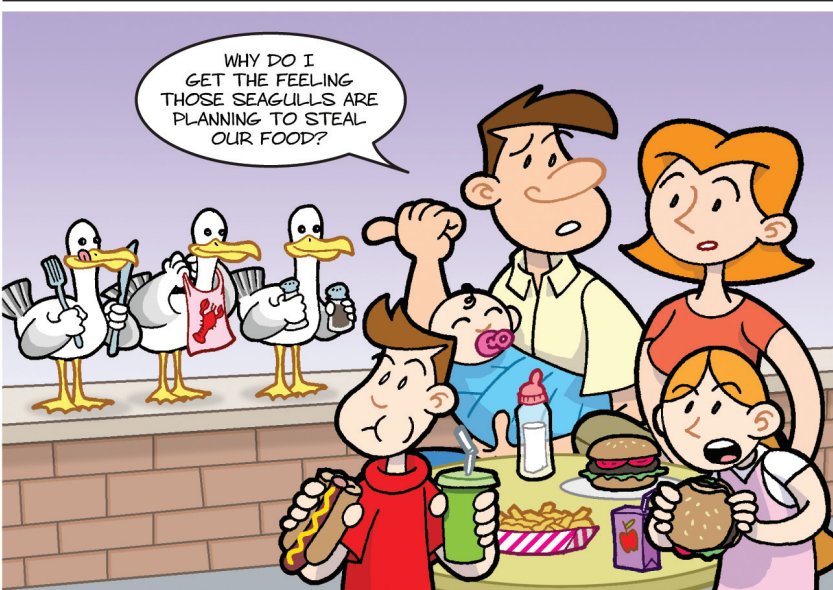
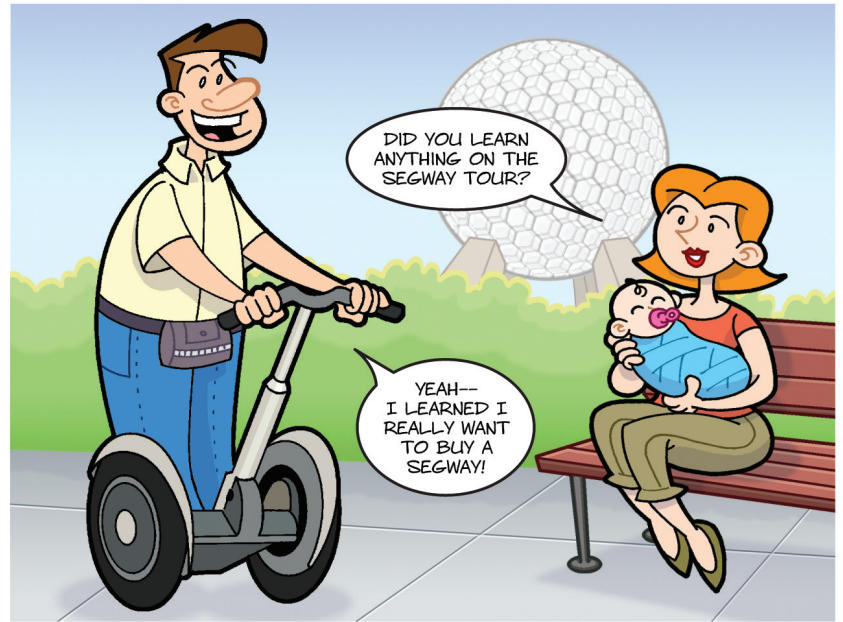


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# AMUSEMENT PARK

by John Green  
& Pat Lewis





# SPOT the DiFFeRence

This LEGO family is frozen in time near the LEGO Store at Downtown Disney.  
Can you find all 10 differences between these two pictures?



1. Number on the boy's shirt changed. 2. Orange pocket missing on boy's shorts. 3. Dalmatian's collar color changed. 4. Girl has extra flower on dress. 5. Man's shirt is longer. 6. Text on round yellow sign changed. 7. Woman's sunglasses are missing. 8. Woman's belt strings are longer. 9. Banner of 'Cinderella' missing from wall on World of Disney store. 10. Plant between boy and man has extra orange flowers.

## MYSTERY PHOTO



### WIN A PRIZE!

Tell us where this photo was taken and you could win a Discovery Cove prize package including a T-shirt, disposable camera, & stuffed dolphin! To enter, e-mail your answer to [mystery@attractionsmagazine.com](mailto:mystery@attractionsmagazine.com)

Hint: To find this hanging decoration, you must travel halfway around the world, yet remain in Orlando.

The deadline for entries is March 10, 2009. One answer allowed per person, per issue. Please include your name, mailing address and telephone number with your answer. Everyone who submits the correct location will go into a drawing. One person, randomly selected from all correct entries, will win a prize. We reserve the right to publish the names of all who submit the correct location. One winner per household allowed every six months.

### LAST ISSUE'S MYSTERY PHOTO



Congratulations to Sonia E Seoane V of Orlando, Fla who correctly guessed last issue's Mystery Photo location. The correct answer was the Curious George Goes to Town water play area at Universal Studios. Sonia will receive an *Attractions Magazine* T-shirt.



# 'Wheel of Fortune' Brings Hollywood Fun to Orlando

**America's Game Holds Elaborate Tapings at SeaWorld Orlando**

Episodes of the popular game show "Wheel of Fortune" were filmed Dec. 11 to 14, 2008 at SeaWorld Orlando. Five episodes were taped each night for a total of 20 shows. Air dates for these episodes begin on March 2, 2009.

The last time the show was taped in Orlando was more than 10 years ago in 1998 at Universal Studios. 'Wheel' regularly brings the show on the road to roughly three different cities each season.

Host Pat Sajak and co-host Vanna White had no plans to vacation while in Orlando; they both came alone and planned to return home after the tapings concluded. Each spends just four days per month taping the show in Hollywood.



**Above:** Vanna White has helmed the puzzle board for 26 years.



**Right:** Contestants are instructed on the rules and take part in rehearsals to become familiar with calling letters and spinning the wheel.

Visit [attractionsmagazine.com](http://attractionsmagazine.com) for a behind-the-scenes video and more photos from 'Wheel of Fortune' at SeaWorld.

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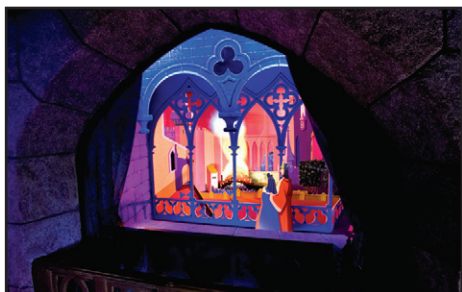




## Attraction News from Outside the Orlando Area

By Andy Guinigundo

### Sleeping Beauty Walkthrough Now Re-Opened



**Anaheim, Calif.** – The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, the Sleeping Beauty Walkthrough attraction re-opened in Disneyland. Scenes from the classic animated feature adorn the castle interior. The attraction is described as a “throw-back” to the original walkthrough and differs from recent editions of the 1980s and 1990s.

### Disneyland Welcomes Rose Bowl Teams



**Anaheim, Calif.** – Rose Bowl festivities kicked off the Friday before New Year’s Day with the Penn State Nittany Lions and the USC Trojans visiting Disneyland. Disneyland has been associated with the Tournament of Roses since 1959. There was a ceremony in front of Sleeping Beauty Castle. Pictured is Mickey Mouse with Joe Paterno, coach of Penn State Nittany Lions since 1966. (USC won the game 38-24.)

### Hard Rock Park Finished?

**Myrtle Beach, S.C.** – The classic rock and roll themed Hard Rock Park that opened in 2008 and abruptly closed its doors last fall may not reopen. Speculators blame the

poor economy and poor marketing for the park’s demise. Local news outlets report the park, now in bankruptcy, was recently up for auction. No bids were received. The fate of rides such as Led Zeppelin The Ride and the Eagles Life in the Fast Lane roller coaster remain a big question mark for 2009.

### Work on Diamondback Coaster Continues



**Mason, Ohio** – Work on Cedar Fair’s most anticipated ride for 2009, the Diamondback Roller Coaster at Kings Island, continues on schedule. Cedar Fair, parent company to Kings Island and other parks across the country, has invested \$22 million in the new coaster. The 230-foot high coaster will feature 10 vertical drops, two helixes and a splashdown finish. The ride is slated to debut in April when the park opens for the season.

### Walk Benefits Childhood Cancer



**Six Flags Parks, USA** – Cure Kids Cancer and Six Flags teamed up to put on a “Walk in the Park.” The annual walk-a-thon that took place last fall involved 12 Six Flags parks across the country. Its goal was to raise awareness of childhood cancers and raise money for children’s hospitals. Anyone raising at least \$100 received free admission to Six Flags. They raised a total of \$250,000. Walkers were treated to entertainment, a chance at prizes, and of course, Six Flags attractions.

### Legoland to Open in Malaysia

**Iskandar, Malaysia** – In December, Merlin Entertainments, owner of Legoland Parks, signed an agreement to bring the first Legoland Park to Asia, specifically Malaysia. The \$210 million project is expected to open to the public in 2013. This announcement comes just months after Legoland Dubai-land was announced. It is to open in 2011 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The new parks are expected to be similar to the other four Legoland parks already in operation in Europe and California.

### Legoland Re-opens “Sea Life”, Acquires Aquarium

**Carlsbad, Calif.** – Diver elves put final touches on an underwater Lego Christmas tree as Sea Life Aquarium reopened in December. The attraction’s planned closure occurred in November just months after opening. More aquatic animals were added as was an interactive sand castle building area. In related news, Legoland’s parent company, Merlin Entertainments, acquired Underwater Adventures Aquarium in the Mall of America in Minnesota. This brings Merlin’s total North American attractions to seven. Merlin plans a \$5 million investment into the aquarium.

### Sea World Australia Opens Coaster

**Queensland, Australia** – Jet Rescue opened in Sea World Australia on Dec. 26, 2008. The theme park, that is not connected to its American namesake, opened in 1958. Similar to SeaWorld Orlando, they have animal attractions and rides. The opening of Jet Rescue marks Sea World’s first foray into coaster building in 25 years. The ride vehicles that are fashioned after wave runners whisk riders through aquatic landscapes at more than 40 miles per hour.

### Disneyland Tokyo to Open Monsters, Inc. Ride

**Tokyo, Japan** – Riders at Disneyland Tokyo will board a Security Tram on a trip into Monster City this spring on the Monsters, Inc. Ride & Go Seek ride. Disney/Pixar characters Mike, Sulley and Boo will join riders in the fun while movie foil, Randall, tries to spoil it. The dark-ride attraction will be similar to the Disney California Adventure attraction that opened in 2006.





*Universal Studios  
December 2008*

**M**acy's Holiday Parade at Universal Studios Orlando features a multitude of colorful characters, from Woody Woodpecker to Scooby-Doo. It also includes giant balloons from the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York and even a special appearance by Santa Claus himself. On this day in late December 2008, however, one of Rocky's squirrel friends, likely brainwashed by Boris and Natasha, scurried his way onto the parade route. Since Bullwinkle was nowhere to be found, these skating flag bearers took on the task of cornering the feisty creature in an effort to get him safely back home.





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